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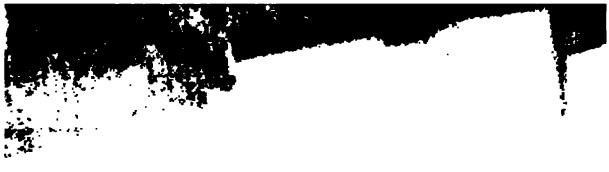

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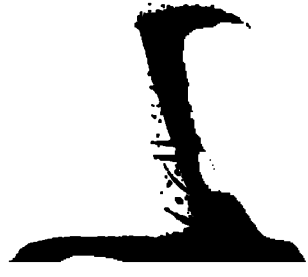

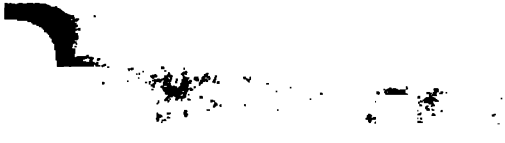

MEMOIRS

OF THE

MARQUIS DE ST. FORLAIX.

VOL. II.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

MARQUIS DE ST. FORLAIX.

Tranſlated from the FRENCH

OF

MONS. FRAMERY.

BY MRS. BROOKE.

L'Honneur, de tous les biens, eſt le plus precieux,
Et par un vieil abus difficile à comprendre,
Nous le pouvons ôter, et ne ſaurions le rendre.
T. CORNEILLE, Illuſtres Ennemis, Act I. Sc. iii.

VOL. II.

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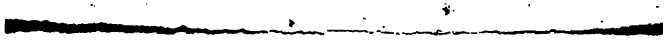

MEMOIRS

OF THE

MARQUIS DE ST. FORLAIX.

LETTER XXVIII.

To Monſ. D'ORNANCE.

AH! Sir, how cruelly do you empoiſon the flattering expreſſions of eſteem with which you have honored me! Do you favor me with ſo many aſſurances of friendſhip, only to make me feel more keenly the mortification of your refuſal?

Ah! for Heaven's ſake, a little leſs delicacy, and a little more compaſſion! If the marriage I ſo ardently ſolicit was really as diſadvantageous as you aſſert, reflect one moment, that my happineſs, that my life, depend upon it. What weight ought a few additional gifts of fortune to have in the balance againſt true felicity!

But are theſe diſadvantages real? is it poſſible to perſuade me they are ſo? me, who, even if love did not enter into the queſtion, ſhould regard your alliance as one of the moſt honorable to which I could aſpire?

Our fortunes are nearly equal; your family is more ancient than mine: and yet you inſiſt that the diſadvantages are all on my ſide. Would not this diſcourſe from any mouth but that of Monſ. D'Ornance,

nance, who is ſincerity itſelf, paſs for the ſevereſt irony?

" Mademoiſelle Julia will bring me," you ſay, " neither titles nor dignities!" She will bring me, Sir, all the virtues of her ſex; and if the titles, the dignities, to which you allude, are the proper recompence of thoſe virtues, it is from me ſhe ought to receive them. I do not, like you, ſhut my eyes to all diſtinctions but thoſe which are the reward of military glory. If you had acquired ſuch, they would not have been conveyed to me in marriage; why then do you inſiſt that I ſhould look on them as eſſential? And if I had this kind of ambition; if I was determined to attach myſelf only to a family honored by them; where ſhould I find one in which they are more frequent and more brilliant than in yours?

The glory of your anceſtors, I might ſay, that acquired by every one of them, is ſufficient to deſtroy your objections.

What will you then oppoſe to my requeſt? what arms remain to you? Thoſe only which you have employed againſt love. You repent of having preferred this paſſion to that of war! I ſhall not determine whether that profeſſion would have indemnified you for the loſs of the calm domeſtic happineſs *you* have taſted; 'tis of *my* views only we are ſpeaking.

But can you, Sir, indeed believe that love is incompatible with our duties? is it neceſſary to repeat to you that common aſſertion, that this paſſion, in taking poſſeſſion of our hearts, imbibes the ſentiments

it

it finds there? It only inflames the thirſt for glory in that ſoul which feels its godlike ardor.

Was not my endeavoring to render myſelf worthy of Mademoiſelle D'Ornance, a neceſſary conſequence of my pretending to her heart?

And what means ſo certain to acquire and to preſerve it, as fulfilling all the duties which honor or our country expects?

A wife like her, far from throwing herſelf between me and glory, would on the contrary point out the noble road which leads to it: ſhe would herſelf conduct me in her train: "Render back to my family," ſhe would ſay, "all the luſtre which be-"longs to it."

If ſhe ſhewed me a dear pledge of her love, it would be to ſay to me, "Add to "the ſplendor of your anceſtors, and de- "ſerve that your ſon ſhould one day ſeek "to imitate you."

Thus will a wife ſpeak, educated like her in the love of virtue. This will be the language of a daughter of Monſ. D'Ornance.

But, Sir, if the arguments you have alledged were real obſtacles to my marriage with Mademoiſelle Julia, would they not be as much ſo to my union with any other? and can you think marriage ought to be proſcribed to the military ſtate? How many brave officers have laid their laurels at the feet of the virtuous partners of their hearts, have returned to taſte in their arms

the

the ſweets of peace, or to expire of their glorious wounds on their boſoms! Who, Sir, are proper to give to the ſtate hearts and arms made to ſerve it, if not thoſe who have ſerved it themſelves? who ſhall teach theſe duties to the riſing generation, if not thoſe who have themſelves fulfilled them?

Is it neceſſary to wait till we quit this noble employment, in order to think of tranſmitting it to others? An old ſoldier, enfeebled by the debauchery almoſt inſeparable from celibacy, will give to his country, an offspring weak, few in number, who will die almoſt in being born; and who cannot be replaced. If one by accident ſurvives, he will ſoon ſee his father ſubmit to the law of nature. He will loſe in him the ſpur which ſhould have animated him in the career of honor.

He will no longer have any perſon capable of pointing out to him the duties he owes to ſociety, and he will forget that ſuch duties exiſt.

A young warrior, on the contrary, who thinks he has only half acquitted himſelf towards his country when he is glorioufly employed in its defence, and who prepares it new ſupports in his poſterity, will take on himſelf the charge of inſtructing them in thoſe qualities which are uſeful to the ſtate. He, by firſt traverſing it himſelf, will ſhew them the road they ought to purſue. He will lead them to the combat: he will load their feeble limbs with heavy arms: he will preſs them to his boſom, and will weep for joy when he feels their young hearts beat with noble ardor.

It is under his father, if poſſible, that a young man ought to make his firſt eſſay in arms.

Behold the duties of a warrior: but they are not the duties of all mankind. He to whom the adorable Julia owes her birth and the virtues which ſhe inherits; he who has devoted her amiable brother to the military ſtate, and given him the nobleſt precepts which we ſhall ſoon have the delight to ſee him purſue with ardor, will certainly have acquired and merited as much glory, as if he himſelf had followed the profeſſion of arms.

You ſee then, Sir, the very circumſtances which appeared to you ſo much againſt my eſtabliſhment, ought rather to engage you to permit it. The friendſhip

with which you honor our family has made you look on yourſelf with much too modeſt eyes.

I preſume to flatter myſelf that I have obviated all your objections. If, as you have the goodneſs to aſſure me, I have been able to inſpire you with any degree of friendſhip and eſteem, your conſent to my happineſs will be the moſt pleaſing proof you can give me of it.

I have the honor to be, &c.

ST. FORLAIX.

LET-

LETTER XXIX.

To HENRIETTA ST. FORLAIX,

at St. Forlaix.

MY dear Henrietta, how amiable, how ſoft, is virtue! how amply does ſhe reward thoſe who obey her precepts! She has her ſorrows, like all other affections; but even in the midſt of thoſe ſorrows ſhe brings conſolation. Her momentary afflictions are fully compenſated. They never fail to be ſucceeded by the pureſt, the moſt lively, and moſt durable pleaſures.

Every delight of which virtue is not the ſource, begins by enchanting, and ends by

tearing the ſoul. She purſues a road directly contrary. Though difficult at firſt, her paths grow inſenſibly eaſy, and conduct to unalterable felicity.

If the laſt ſenſation we experience is always the moſt lively, and that which ſtrikes us moſt, virtue is then preferable to every other good.

Do not regard this as a leſſon of morality which I am giving you, my dear Henrietta; it is rather a felicitation which I make myſelf.

I am at length happy, and I think I may flatter myſelf nothing will trouble my happineſs. I no longer oppoſe that of your amiable brother; he has obſerved the only conduct worthy of him and of me. I ſee him every day, and I ſee him by my mother's

mother's command. I confeſs I love him, and I am permitted to confeſs it. He divines my tenderneſs, and I do not contradict it.

He has even obtained of me ſome trifling favors. I bluſh whilſt I grant them; but I conſult virtue, and ſhe makes me no reproaches.

We were yeſterday in the garden. St. Forlaix appeared leſs gay than uſual. His eyes, which he turned towards me, ſeemed full of ſorrow. He endeavored to hide from me the inquietudes which preyed upon him. He was obliged to yield to my preſſing and tender intreaties. He had wrote to my father, to demand his conſent to our union; he had that very day received from him an anſwer equally noble and affecting. My father would not conſent

ſent that St. Forlaix ſhould, by eſpouſing me, form an alliance which he regarded as diſadvantageous to him.

" My Julia," ſaid your brother, " if " your father is indeed determined to op- " poſe our marriage, muſt we then be " doomed to paſs our lives in wretched- " neſs! if you love me, can you reſolve " to make another happy! Soft and ſub- " miſſive as I know you to be, you will " obey the orders of your parents, and " even deny me the ſatisfaction of know- " ing how much this ſacrifice coſts you."

" You deceive yourſelf, my dear St. " Forlaix," replied I. " All you predict " would really have happened, if, in com- " pliance with your wiſhes, I had had the " weakneſs to form theſe tender ties with- " out the permiſſion of thoſe on whom I " depend.

" depend. As they would not have con-
" firmed our vows, they would have had
" a right to diſſolve them. But my con-
" duct has ſecured us from this misfor-
" tune. My mother herſelf commanded
" me to love you. She was preſent when
" I promiſed you my tenderneſs. My
" heart perhaps had already prevented her
" commands, was perhaps diſpoſed to fa-
" vor you even in contradiction to her
" will: but it was in her preſence I firſt
" confeſſed this to you; nor till this con-
" feſſion did I certainly know it myſelf.
" I am conſcious, my mother is not the
" the ſole miſtreſs of my fate; neither has
" my father alone the right to break the
" chain her maternal hands has formed.

" My heart has not given itſelf up to
" love, without the approbation of thoſe
" who ought to diſpoſe of it. If their

" inclina-

" inclination ſhould change, this heart is
" not reſponſible, as it is by their order
" it has engaged to love for ever.

" My father's delicacy alone oppoſes
" our union: I will never form one to
" which he does not conſent, nor ſhall he
" ever force me to make a ſecond choice.
" I love you, St. Forlaix: it is only by
" making you happy I can ſecure felicity
" to myſelf. If I am not yours, I will
" never be another's."

St. Forlaix was tranſported; this unaffected confeſſion of my ſentiments made every obſtacle diſappear from before his eyes. He ſwore to love me always, however fate might diſpoſe of us. He demanded of me the ſame vow. I promiſed what he deſired; which was all I allowed myſelf.

myſelf. He inſiſted that my hand ſhould ſeal this promiſe on his lips. I could not avoid conſenting. He devoured it with kiſſes. They penetrated my ſoul. He obliged me to confeſs to him the pleaſure I felt — ah! my Henrietta! how delicious are theſe lawful enjoyments!

It is in your power to find the ſame, my deareſt friend. Endeavor to render my brother's heart as virtuous and as pure as that of St. Forlaix. In a few years, when he ſhall have merited by his ſervices a rank equal to that which your brother enjoys, what ſhould prevent our families, already made one by the tendereſt ties, from being yet more ſtrictly united? How happy ſhould I be to be twice the ſiſter of my Henrietta!

Above all things, do not, my dear friend, confide too much in yourſelf: your manner of thinking is too violent, not to have every thing to fear. Why am I not with you! You ſhould not have a thought which you did not repoſe in my boſom. I ſhould have only to remonſtrate, to make you feel the conſequence of every ſtep you were about to take.

But you have in your own family a man above all prejudices, and by that circumſtance in a ſituation to point out exactly the bounds of vice, and of virtue. He thinks ſufficiently ill of human nature in general, but he alſo renders the ſtricteſt juſtice to all mankind. An action truly good is more valuable in his eyes than in thoſe of any other perſon. His counſels will ſurely be very uſeful to you.

You

You will know I ſpeak of Monſ. De Prele. St. Forlaix has communicated to me ſome of his letters: they have inſpired me with the greateſt eſteem and veneration for his character.

Adieu! my dear Henrietta! I hear St. Forlaix. I have paid what I owe to friendſhip. Allow love to have its turn.

Yours,

JULIA.

LET-

LETTER XXX.

To JULIA D'ORNANCE, at Paris.

PARDON, my Julia, pardon. Since the ſight of a poor unfortunate, who is no longer herſelf, and who can never be reſtored to what ſhe was, is not worthy of you; ſince it is now too late to lend a ſaving hand to your friend, already fallen into the precipice; turn your eyes from your Henrietta.

You lately affected not to know her. She now may truly be ſaid no longer to exiſt. In her place, behold an unhappy creature, a prey to a thouſand torments, a thouſand

a thouſand contrary emotions. She unites in herſelf the extremes of every human affection. She is not only ſenſible to love, ſhe is devoured by it.

The idea of virtue, ſtill preſent with her, would only reſiſt in the heart of another; in hers, it wounds, it deſtroys: it lays all waſte.

Another would complain of all who oppoſed her happineſs; but this ſentiment is too weak for my ſoul. It feels an unbounded abhorrence, I might even ſay a rage, againſt every obſtacle which oppoſes its deſires.—It was at the very moment when my ſoul was moſt loſt in love, that they came to force from it the object it yet ſcarce poſſeſſed. Alas! they have ſeparated us!

Julia, retire from me: you can no longer ſave your Henrietta. Love is become to my ſoul an abſolute want, the animating fire without which it cannot exiſt.

My heart is bound as in an eternal chain, which I have not the reſolution even to wiſh to break.

Great Heaven! I was innocent whilſt I was happy. In leaving me my happineſs, they would have alſo left me my virtue. The monſters beheld my tears, my deſpair; and yet forced from me the idol of my heart. I ſaw him every hour, he lived for me alone, and I ſhall now ſee him no more — O! Julia! fly love, if you are capable of feeling it as I do — I love like one diſtracted — I read over what I have wrote, and am ſtruck with horror — *I love like*

like one diſtracted. What an expreſſion! yet it does not too ſtrongly expreſs what I feel. I weep: it is the firſt time ſince I have been unhappy. I had occaſion for this relief, to be able to make you the detail of my misfortune.

My lover came here every day, and I taſted without interruption even the exceſs of happineſs. He paſſed two days without letting me hear of him. My ſoul, alarmed, and trembling, experienced in one moment all the torments of abſence. He came at length with his father. His father! with what ſentiments of horror would he inſpire me, if he was not alſo yours! The air of Corſange was ſad, dejected. His eyes, ſtill enflamed, carried the traces of tears. His father appeared as firm and ſerene as virtue itſelf. His countenance gave you

the

the idea of virtue, but cruelty was in his heart. He announced to us the departure, or rather the ſlavery, of Corſange. He brought him to bid us a laſt adieu. He was conducting him to M—, where he deſtined him to paſs the remainder of the winter in quarters, and from thence, without permitting him to ſee me, without regard to our paſſion, to our mutual vows, to be baniſhed for ever to a world ſavage and unknown, where death would be his only hope.

On hearing this order, I fainted, and fell on the floor without ſenſe or motion. The tears of my lover, which I felt trickle on my face, recalled me to the light. I fancied I could diſtinguiſh them from my own: they penetrated my very ſoul. The reſt of the company had alſo the inhumanity to aſſiſt me. They were ſurprized at

this ſight. Your father attempted to take away Corſange, to leave me, as he expreſſed it, in repoſe — what repoſe! far from him on whom my ſoul doated! He forced him from me in ſpite of my reſiſtance. I threw myſelf at his feet, and embraced his knees. I demanded my lover with the moſt paſſionate cries.

They had not endeavored to ſoften the ſtroke when they informed me of his departure: they had treated with harſhneſs, they had not reſpected, my ſorrow; it was exceſſive, and took from me the uſe of reaſon. The fury of a mother, whoſe ſon is maſſacred in her boſom, is leſs wild, leſs extravagant, than mine.

My looks awed into ſilence all around me. They were ſtruck; aſtoniſhed. His

father himſelf — I believe even he was on the point of being ſoftened —

" My ſon, take your leave."

" No, never," cried I, throwing myſelf into the arms of Corſange, and preſſing him with ardor to my boſom. He held me cloſely embraced; nothing on earth could have been able to ſeparate us.

O, my God! it was thy hand alone! — My raging madneſs carries me even to accuſe Heaven.

Why was it thy will to render my body weak, at the moment when my paſſion was moſt ſtrong? I ſhould elſe ſtill have held my lover to my boſom.

My

My mother, I think, made me very ſevere reproaches during this whole ſcene. I did not attend to her; ſhe was not in my thoughts; it was not ſhe who took from me the only bleſſing my heart valued: my tranſports could not then be addreſſed to her.

I only liſtened to, I only implored, my lover and his father. A ſecond fainting betrayed me to wretchedneſs. I recovered, and found myſelf alone—alone indeed! ſince my lover was no longer there.

My apartment was ſtrewed with the remains of his habits—terrible and dear proofs of his reſiſtance, and of the violence with which he had been treated.

I ſhall ſee him no more, and yet I live—the fire which conſumes me ſupports my

being in ſpite of myſelf. That inward languor of which I have often complained, will ſoon deſtroy this feeble frame. How kind will be its friendly aid! I have not felt it, ſince that cruel moment, till this day. Some moments—whilſt writing to you—all around me appears horrible—but I am in a dejection—my head—my head—yet I prefer this ſtate—yes, I am much more tranquil ſince I have wrote to you.—The ſcene which I have been deſcribing has relieved me extremely.—Julia, I feel myſelf relieved—I have wept, and it has been of ſervice to me—it is a long time ſince I have wept—I could not, my Julia, I could not—I am much better than before—only I am weak beyond all expreſſion.—They leave me alone—my grandfather does not come out of his apartment—my mother is in that of Monſ. De Prele—he is going to leave us—

he

he ſets out for Paris, I believe, to-morrow. He was not preſent at this ſhocking ſcene. But I feel myſelf very weak — my heart ſickens — but this is very uſual with me ſince that day — that day —

(Wrote the following morning.)

I wrote to you laſt night, my dear Julia. My head was confuſed, my reaſon diſordered, I knew not what I wrote. I dare not read it to-day. Whatever recalls to me the cauſe of my miſery, is too painful for me to bear. I was taken in the midſt of my letter with one of thoſe faintings to which I have been ſome days ſubject. It laſted two hours.

My mother, whom I had entreated to ſuffer me to be alone, found me in a ſwoon, and thought me dead. They will

not again leave me. O my Julia! they will not let me weep at liberty: their preſence ſeems to reproach me.

Every human paſſion, worked up into fury, has agitated my ſoul this night — it has been tormented by the moſt painful ſentiments, the moſt cruel ideas.—He is only a few leagues diſtant, and he is to me as if at the extremity of the univerſe.—He will ſoon really be ſo.

But adieu!—I perceive I write always the ſame things—I weary you, and afflict myſelf. To me then all is empoiſoned, even to the pleaſure of writing to you. Adieu!

Your

HENRIETTA.

LET-

LETTER XXXI.

To Monſ. De St. Forlaix,
at Paris.

IN two days I expect to be at Paris. Monſ. D'Ornance will be there in eight. I ſhall ſee his daughter, and he will ſee you; we ſhall both ſatisfy an impatience that is pretty equal.

Believe me, you will prevail with him if you chuſe it.

Your Julia has reconciled me a little to the human ſpecies. That you may not

except, that the prerogatives which they fancy attached to their ſex, make them more vain and aſſuming: but I ſpeak of thoſe whoſe ſuperior education has rendered them, in their own opinions, the arbiters of genius and taſte.

I have ſeen ſome who pretended to the perfect knowledge of every ſcience and every talent, and who, deceived by a croud of ſervile flatterers, have taken their caprices for rules, the fooliſh flights of their imaginations for diſcoveries, their ſentiments for laws, and their obſtinacy for firmneſs of mind. I have never been in favor with theſe, having always given them to underſtand, in the politeſt manner poſſible, that they had not common ſenſe.

I have ſeen others who confined themſelves to the metaphyſicks of tenderneſs, as

more within reach of their abilities. Theſe are certainly the moſt agreable, if they are handſome; for with them, there are few diſſertations that do not end in demonſtration.

But, after all, how tedious is this jargon! If it is to laſt long, their favors will be bought very dear.

There are others, the moſt inſupportable of all, who paſs their lives in devoting to virtue reaſonings as inſipid as thoſe of the other in favor of love.

This order of women is compoſed of the old and the ugly; and nothing can equal the ſtrength of their prejudices, except the weakneſs of their underſtandings.

You will find pretenſions in all, modeſty in very few, true virtue in none.

Muſt it not be very pleaſing to me, who have had the misfortune to know only ſuch as theſe, to find one who comes up to the idea of perfection my imagination had formed? is it not very delightful to find one alone, after having deſpaired of it for near thirty years, and to find her deſtined to be yours?—But I will not yet give up the point: I muſt ſee your Julia before I am abſolutely converted.

Monſ. D'Ornance is almoſt as enthuſiaſtic in regard to you. I will bring you myſelf his anſwer to your laſt letter. He has made me remark one very extraordinary circumſtance, which is, that you have

have never ſeen each other. He was at his houſe in town all the time you was at St. Forlaix; his affairs brought him to his ſeat at the very time when you left us to go to Paris. His curioſity to know you is only the ſtronger for this circumſtance. Monſ. De l'Etang will anſwer your letter for your mother: I am to bring this pacquet alſo.

But to return to your ſiſter: they would none of them believe me, and what I foreſaw has happened.

I entreated them not to ſuffer Corſange to viſit here. He came here, notwithſtanding all I could ſay. He has pretended to love Henrietta: ſhe has conceived a paſſion for him, which has all the exceſs, all the violence, of which her character is particularly ſuſceptible.

I diſcovered

I diſcovered in her this quick ſenſibility of ſoul. Her family fancied her indolent and cold, whilſt ſhe was a prey to ſentiments which were only ſuſpended by her uncertainty of their object.

At length, her love and her turn of mind are manifeſt. It is yet poſſible to find a remedy for the evil they have occaſioned; but, even this, you will ſee, they will neglect doing.

There paſſed a dreadful ſcene the day Corſange ſet out for M—: ſince that day Henrietta has been in a ſtate of deſperation. She is every moment on the borders of the tomb. The family are alarmed. They have had ſeveral conſultations: they have aſked my advice; I have told them plainly, that if they did not wiſh miſery ſhould

be

be the portion of both, they muſt marry them inſtantly.

Monſ. De l'Etang is determined this marriage ſhall never take place. Your mother conſents it ſhall, but would defer it till Corſange is properly fixed in the world; Monſ. D'Ornance, who has not yet explained himſelf in regard to this propoſal, only inſiſts with firmneſs on his ſon's embarking immediately for the Iſlands; adding, that after his return he ſhall be able to judge better in what manner to diſpoſe of him.

In conſequence of this reſolution, he has obtained for him a marine lieutenancy, and has confined him in garriſon at M—. God ſend all this may turn out as they expect! But they cannot cure me of my fears.

You

You have no other concern in this tranſaction, than the intereſt your affection will naturally make you take in all which relates to perſons ſo dear to you. It will not at all affect your marriage.

Do not ſay too much of me to Julia. I would ſee her, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, *incognito*, to be able to judge of her the better.

Adieu! Have you been to thank Madame D'Eſſ—?

Your affectionate uncle,

DE PRELE.

LETTER XXXII.

To Monſ. ST. FORLAIX,

at Paris.

M——.

YOU have conquered me, Sir, not by the ſolidity of your arguments, to which, plauſible as they are, I could full reply; but by the extraordinary eſteem with which you have inſpired me. I confeſs, you owe all to my ſelf-love.

The pleaſure of having Monſ. St. Forlaix for my ſon-in-law overbalances in my heart the conſideration of *his* intereſts; I think

think them injured by this marriage; and yet I cannot deny myſelf the advantage, the happineſs, which I hope to acquire by it. What an idea muſt my confeſſion of ſuch a ſelfiſh way of thinking give you of me!

I leave you then, Sir, abſolute maſter of all which depends on me. I ſhall be at Paris in eight days: I expect to taſte there every pleaſure; that of ſeeing you (which I have long deſired), that of embracing a daughter whom I tenderly love, and that of uniting you to each other.

How ardently do I wiſh my ſon reſembled you! Your idea of him is a very favorable one. My moſt ardent wiſh is, that it may be realized; but I greatly fear he will never merit it. His frivolous and unworthy purſuits and inclinations, with the

the little paſſion he has ever expreſſed for glory, make me very apprehenſive he will remain as much a ſtranger to it as his father, but without the ſame motives to plead in his excuſe.

It is not on trifling appearances my fears are founded. Contrary to my views, to the profeſſion to which I have deſtined him, he has ſuffered himſelf to be ſurprized by the moſt violent ſentiments of love for your ſiſter. I know ſhe has merit ſufficient to inſpire, and to excuſe them; but they are not the leſs inconſiſtent with the happineſs of both. Even admitting all the reaſons by which you juſtify the choice you have made of my daughter, theſe reaſons prove nothing in favor of Corſange: he muſt firſt have a right to employ the arms with which you have vanquiſhed me.

How

How many rights have you to plead, which he has not!

He accuſes me of cruelty, becauſe I tear him from a paſſion which muſt be fatal to him. Let him deſerve what he aſks, and he ſhall find he has a father.

It is right to encourage by hope the deſire of performing laudable actions; but happineſs ought to be the recompence of virtue alone.

I wait only for his leaving M—, to ſatisfy your impatience, and ſtill more my own.

D'ORNANCE.

LET-

LETTER XXXIII.

To Monſ. ST. FORLAIX,
at Paris.

St. Fotlaix.

YOUR mother and myſelf receive too much honor, my dear ſon, by your alliance with Mademoiſelle D'Ornance, not to conſent to it with our whole hearts. Her family is one of the moſt noble in France.

I remember to have heard her grandfather, the Baron De Poultot, whom I knew intimately, and who always ſupport-

ed

ed the character of a very honeſt and gallant man, ſay they had ſeveral times made alliances with foreign princes, and even with ſome ſovereign houſes.

The Marquis De V—, who was Colonel of the regiment in which I then ſerved as Cornet, and who ſince died ſo glorioufly at the battle of Steinkirck, which Marſhal Luxembourg gave in 1692, had himſelf been Ambaſſador, and was at that time Marſhal of France. He aſſured me there had been ſeveral ambaſſadors in his houſe, which is that of Monſ. D'Ornance.

They have loſt ſome of their titles, becauſe the family has been divided into ſeveral branches, and is not ſo rich as it was. But they ſtill retain ſufficient to intitle them to an alliance with any houſe of our rank.

Monſ.

Monſ. D'Ornance is Viſcount De Charcey, Marquis D'Eſtiville and De Fortiere; and I cannot conceive why he has taken only the name of D'Ornance, and has given that of Corſange to his ſon: 'tis aſtoniſhing he ſhould chuſe to take two little ſeignorial fiefs, when he has a right to others which are ſo much more diſtinguiſhed.

I once aſked him the reaſon of this. He told me, "he did not wiſh his ſon "ſhould have titles till he had merited "them; and that as to himſelf, he would "not be adorned with honorable appella-"tions which he had done nothing to "obtain."

However this be, you ſee we have no occaſion for any ſcruples in reſpect to family;

mily; eſpecially as this has diſtinguiſhed itſelf in the road of honor: and it is this honor that we ought always firſt to conſider.

There is not the leaſt ſtain with which it is poſſible to reproach them, if not perhaps the indiſcretions of the little Corſange, who was confined by his father at ſixteen in the caſtle of S—; and as he embarks immediately for the Iſlands, from whence he will never return, at leaſt not till he has proved very well by his actions that his ſentiments are ſuch as become his rank, there is nothing to be feared on that ſide.

Endeavor then, my dear ſon, to acquit yourſelf of the obligations into which you entered when you engaged to ſerve ſo brave and benevolent a Monarch. There is not

on

on earth a Prince who better merits faithful ſervants. You cannot therefore diſpenſe with yourſelf from ſerving him with zeal, eſpecially as your anceſtors have ſhewn you the road.

Endeavor alſo to render happy the perſon to whom you are going to be united; they tell me, ſhe is very worthy of being ſo.

Adieu! my dear ſon! Your mother and I embrace you, and give you our bleſſing.

Yours, &c.

DE L'ETANG.

LETTER XXXIV.

To HENRIETTA DE ST. FORLAIX, at St. Forlaix.

Paris.

WHAT a letter have I received from you, my dear Henrietta! how has it touched my heart! It is far from feeling the indignation you ſuppoſe; it is on the contrary penetrated with all the compaſſion which friendſhip owes to the unhappy.

Recall a little your reaſon, my deareſt friend; and, however painful it may be, paſs

paſs over with me the events which have plunged you in deſpair.

You love Corſange: you think yourſelf adored by him, becauſe you deſerve it, as well by your amiable qualities, as by the exceſs of your paſſion for him: I will believe it. It is ſo natural to feel this ſentiment for you, that I cannot doubt of my brother's tenderneſs. But, my dear Henrietta, is this paſſion conſiſtent with virtue? have you both conſulted what you owe to your parents? have you reflected, that the authority they have over you ought to be more powerful than the ties of love? If you have forgot all theſe duties, ought you to complain of any but yourſelves?

You have neglected, you have trampled upon, theſe ſacred obligations. You ought

to expect to loſe for ever the hope of a happineſs, which you have aimed at poſſeſſing too ſoon.

If you conſider your views with the coolneſs and impartiality neceſſary, they muſt appear to you ſurrounded with invincible obſtacles; and yet you are ſo happy as to have only ſuch as are trifling, eaſy to ſurmount, and at the worſt temporary, to encounter; ſuch as only oppoſe your happineſs now, in order to render it in the end more certain.

Corſange's family, and your own, have forced him from you; but they do not deprive you of him for ever? Have your parents commanded you to renounce the hope of being one day his? have they ſpoke of your choice as unworthy of you? What an idea will you give me of your ſoul,

ſoul, my Henrietta, if you make me ſuppoſe your deſires too violent to admit of the leaſt delay!

Why is the huſband you deſire refuſed you? Becauſe his youth does not allow him yet to have an eſtabliſhment in the world; and a man who has not, is an improper match for one of the rank and merits of my Henrietta. It is becauſe the marriage which now appears to you ſo deſirable would deſtroy the hopes entertained of this young man, and be the occaſion of the moſt bitter regret to you both.

They remove him from you, that theſe reaſons may no longer ſubſiſt. They wiſh you to have no cauſe to bluſh for him, when he is preſented to you as a lover.

How is it poſſible, my dear Henrietta, that you ſhould have given yourſelf up ſo abſolutely to love, when you had ſo many reflections to make?

You ſay he loves you: be it ſo; let him then prove it by his ardor to deſerve you.

His father has determined the point at which he is to arrive before he aſpires to you: the road is marked out to him, but not the time he is to take to paſs it. Let him abridge it himſelf; let him haſten his ſteps towards the deſired goal: let your remembrance and his love be the ſpurs to animate him. Thus inſpired, he may perform in two years what others ſcarce attain in ten.

You will then be happy; his father will no longer oppoſe any obſtacles to your felicity; Corſange will have acquired the right of breaking through them all: and what are two years to the happineſs of a life?

How many unfortunate people paſs their whole exiſtence without having this hope to look forward to!

Guard your heart, therefore, my dear Henrietta, from deſpair: if you love Corſange, for his ſake be careful of your health; it ought to be very dear to him; but you will not ſucceed in attempting to re-eſtabliſh it, except you adopt more reaſonable ſentiments. You ſhould once again have read over your letter; perhaps, inſtead of

afflicting you, it would have made you bluſh, and have corrected you.

My father will be here in a few days. If my brother is not gone, I will do my utmoſt to ſerve you both. I will attempt to render your union as near as you deſire. I will employ all the ardor of friendſhip, and the firſt refuſal ſhall not diſcourage me.

My father, I know, is as inflexible as he is juſt; but I will endeavor to gain ſomething on his temper. Make on your ſide all poſſible efforts on your heart.

May I be ſo happy as to bring you all to think in the ſame manner, that I may have the delight to ſee all thoſe I love ſatisfied!

Your

Your uncle, Monſ. De Prele, whom I ſaw for the firſt time yeſterday, will join with pleaſure in my requeſt. He is deſirous your marriage ſhould take place at the ſame time with ours.

Whatever are his reaſons for being of this opinion, it cannot be otherwiſe than advantageous to your wiſhes.

Monſ. De Prele is one of the moſt amiable and reſpectable men I ever ſaw. His converſation, next to that of St. Forlaix, is what I moſt deſire and love on earth. I do not know what is the foundation of this ſympathy which ſo forcibly inclines us to each other, but his merit will certainly juſtify it on my ſide.

I wiſhed you to have been guided by his advice. Though he is an enemy to

love, he is acquainted with the human heart, and knows how to compaſſionate its weakneſſes; his friendly art would have ſupported without diſcouraging you.

Let your own reflections ſupply his place, and do what he would have done.

Open your eyes, my deareſt friend, and you will ſee that happineſs is ſtill within your reach.

You may, without forgetting your paſſion, render yourſelf miſtreſs of it.

Conſider, that this victory alone is wanting, to make the ſofteſt hopes ſucceed to your preſent horrible deſpair.

Adieu!

Adieu! my dear Henrietta! tell your Julia you are happy; do not give her the pain of being ſo without her friend.

Adieu!

JULIA.

LETTER XXXV.

To JULIA D'ORNANCE,
at Paris.

St. Forlaix.

YOU are perfectly in the right, Madam; I gave myſelf up too much at firſt to an inclination which I thought innocent, but which you aſſure me is not ſo. I was blind, but I am cured. I now ſee clearly my error.

You have given me advice, wiſe, prudent, and worthy of you: your heart is not extremely ſuſceptible of love, and it has

has conſequently been the more eaſy to you to point out to another the means of flying it. I diſcovered the excellence of your advice, and have made proper uſe of it. You could not have expected leſs from my friendſhip than this implicit deference to the counſels you have been pleaſed to give me.

I have ſeen in the ſame light with you what I owe to my mother and family; it was certainly a very ridiculous paſſion, which attempted to free itſelf from the conventions of ſociety. I have felt that the lover who alone could make me happy, ought not to be preferred to thoſe to whom cuſtom has determined I muſt be abſolutely ſubject.

I compared with the original the faithful portrait which you, with all the ſincerity

cerity of a ſiſter, have drawn of your brother; and though, after the ſtricteſt examination, I have not found one ſtroke of reſemblance, I have, notwithſtanding, ſuppoſed that love, which generally renders us more clear-ſighted, might in this inſtance have embelliſhed its object.

I have alſo made another reflection, that as you were more intereſted than me to diſcover the truth, you would naturally ſucceed better in the attempt. Thus I have believed you merely on your word.

I thank Monſ. De Prele for his very obliging deſign in reſpect to me, as well as for the reaſons which inſpire him with it, and which you are ſo kind as to hide from me on a principle of politeneſs. I thank you alſo for the efforts you offer to make

in

in order to bring about an event for which I am no longer anxious. As you are very ſure of not ſucceeding, be ſo good as to keep the ardor of your friendſhip for a better occaſion.

Monſ. De Corſange is gone; I ſhall ſee him no more; I ſhall think no more of him. I comprehend perfectly, that it is the happineſs of both our friends have in view, in tearing us from each other. We ſhould ſoon have repented of our marriage. How could a woman be happy with a huſband who was not a Colonel?

This reminds me of wiſhing you a great deal of felicity in the union you are about to form. I embrace you with the ſame degree of ſincerity with which you deſire to ſee me happy.

HENRIETTA DE ST. FORLAIX.

P. S.

P. S. Though I am perfectly cured of the love which I had for Monſ. De Corſange, yet you may, by ſpeaking to me of him, renew ideas which cannot but be diſagreable. I therefore entreat you to write to me no more. Beſides, as you are going to have ſo much buſineſs, this ceſſation will be a great relief to you.

LET-

LETTER XXXVI.

To Henrietta De St. Forlaix.

M——.

ALL is deſperate, my adorable Henrietta. My father is as inflexible as you feared, and as I foreſaw he would be. Nothing has been able to touch him; neither my tears, my deſpair, nor the menaces which fury drew from me. My departure is fixed; in two days I embark. My father, or ſome of his ſervants, keep me always in ſight. I dread not finding an opportunity to eſcape.

How

How horrible is the priſon which l
ders me from claſping you in my ar
from enrapturing you with my care
and being myſelf tranſported with your

This idea fills up the meaſure of
rage, even to exceſs. There is nothing
which it does not render me capable.
will not ſupport this barbarous ſlav
No, before two days, whatever is the c
ſequence, I will find means to procure
ſelf a releaſe.

I write to you, my dear Henrietta,
cauſe I cannot ſee you this night as u
My father, who is now at M——, in
on my going once more to the caſtl
Ornance before my departure; and, le
ſhould ſteal a moment from the cruel
ties he impoſes, has fixed on this
night for our journey.

Fatal night! which would have been ſo ſweet if I had paſſed it in the arms of my Henrietta, and which my ſeparation from her will render ſo tormenting!

You ſee now that the expedient of which we have availed ourſelves, however violent it appeared to you at firſt, was neceſſary. But it is yet only a precaution which we muſt reſerve for the laſt extremity.

The moſt certain means of obtaining at preſent the happineſs which they refuſe us, is flight. Do not be alarmed, Henrietta; conſider that nothing leſs than this ſtep can force our perſecutors to unite us.

If you ſhould even declare to your mother your yet uncertain ſtate, do you ſuppoſe

poſe ſhe would not make every effort to prevent her ſhame, without having recourſe to the means we deſire? A trifle may deſtroy your pregnancy, even ſuppoſing it real, and then we are loſt; if we are at a diſtance from *your* family when our connexion is diſcovered, they will be conſtrained to give a conſent which will reſtore their honor, and the refuſal of which would cover them with ſhame; *mine* will be too happy to receive for me, this very conſent which they refuſe with ſuch obſtinacy.

As to us, my dear Henrietta, love will, till they conſent to join us in more legal ties, ſupply every title which marriage could give.

You ſee, therefore, the neceſſity of our reſolving on flight; think that it is in your huſband's arms you are going to take refuge.

... Where can you find a more ſure, re ſoft, aſylum?

ut the more I feel that we are forced ke this ſtep, the more painful to me the obſtacles which oppoſe it. Alas! e is one, the moſt cruel of all, and the eaſy to conquer — it is not to you I bluſh to confeſs it — my father, who uſts me, and who deſires to retain me ever in his chains, deprives me with of the means to break them.

of what I am obliged to expend to ſup- my rank, I am not allowed even to the keeper. I have in this place no urce; if you can on your ſide do no- g, and my father does not this night into my hands what he intends for my age, we muſt renounce all hope. Re- nce hope! what a diſtracting idea,

when this hope is that of poſſeſſing my Henrietta!

No, it ſhall not be my fault if we are unhappy. I will find means, though I yet know not what, to deliver both from this hard captivity. My Henrietta renders every thing lawful. My firſt duty is to enſure her happineſs. I know no law but that which commands me to adore her. I will communicate to you more at length my deſigns to-morrow night. I hope to deceive the officious eyes that are upon me, as I have always done ſince that fatal moment; that day which was followed by a night ſo delicious.

But let us not give way to theſe too charming ideas. We are not yet near enough happineſs, to ſtop to contemplate it.

Be

Be careful of the precious pledge of our love, if it is indeed true that my Henrietta hopes to be a mother. It is to this dear pledge, perhaps, we ſhall be indebted for our felicity. Reflect, that it is the fruit of our firſt pleaſures. Let your tenderneſs for it be as great as were our tranſports.

It would double the love which unites our hearts, if that were capable of increaſe.

Have no confidence in my ſiſter. With her cold counſels, and her affected wiſdom, ſhe will never taſte the half of theſe delights which enchant us. That pretended virtue of which ſhe is ſo vain, proceeds only from malice, or from the languid indolence of her temper. She blames the exceſs

exceſs of our love, becauſe ſhe is ignorant what love is.

Have you ſent her the letter I dictated? It is the only means to break a correſpondence ſo deſtructive to our tenderneſs.

Why does ſhe wiſh to ſow remorſe in the boſom of innocence? how could you one moment liſten to her perfidious leſſons? would you receive advice againſt the lover who adores you? can ſhe who attempts to defame his character to you truly love you?

Dear Henrietta, you cannot be at the ſame time her friend, and my miſtreſs; conſult your heart, and chuſe.

Adieu!

Adieu! My Henrietta cannot forget her lover, her huſband, the father of her infant. He burns to aſſume in the ſight of all the univerſe names ſo dear to his heart. They will ſee us happy, and believe us innocent: our love will be ſo great, they will pardon us all of which it is the cauſe.

CORSANGE.

LETTER XXXVII.

To Monſ. ST. FORLAIX,

at Verſailles.

Paris.

MONS. D'Ornance wrote to us yeſterday; not that he was arrived, as we expected, and he promiſed, but to relate to us an accident which has overwhelmed him with the moſt poignant ſorrow. His departure for Paris, and that of Corſange for the Iſlands, was determined: all was prepared, when a ſoldier belonging to the Count De C——, under whom Corſange ſerved, came to inform Monſ.

D'Ornance, that his ſon had ſuddenly diſappeared; that they had purſued him in vain, having been unable to gain any intelligence of him.

This ſoldier, gained by promiſes, and intimidated by threats, had confeſſed further, that Corſange had left the garriſon privately every night except when on guard; that he had gone on foot, diſguiſed, without informing any one whither he went: that he returned conſtantly at day-break, harraſſed, fatigued, covered with ſweat and dirt, with every appearance of having been to ſome diſtant place.

We know not what to think of this event. I have ſeen Monſ. De P—, who is juſt arrived from St. Forlaix. He ſpoke much to me of your ſiſter: he tells me her tranquillity ſeems abſolutely reſtor-

ed: her health begins to be re-eſtabliſhed. She is more gay than uſual. There ſcarce remain any traces of inquietude on her countenance. She has nothing left of her firſt complaints, except the faintings, which are much leſs frequent: ſhe has often ſickneſſes, which the family attribute to the violent agitation her mind has lately undergone. Theſe circumſtances have convinced them that ſhe is ignorant of Corſange's indiſcretions: they induce me to think, on the contrary, that ſhe is the accomplice of them.

They fancy themſelves very clear-ſighted, in ſaying ſhe would not be ſo tranquil if ſhe had any cauſe for ſelf-reproach. They miſtake; Henrietta is not yet arrived at the hour of remorſe. Nothing that does not interfere with her paſſion is

at

at preſent capable of diſquieting her. She lives only in her love, and they may judge of the ſtate of her paſſion by that of her ſoul. But they will not believe me, and their obſtinacy often leads them to commit follies.

You will judge of the ſecret bitterneſs which this unhappy father feels. His wife is furious; ſhe is no longer herſelf; whilſt he appears, in his letter, almoſt inſenſible to this blow. I however believe him to be in reality much more affected than her, as he has a firmneſs of mind which enables him to reſtrain his exterior, though his ſoul is exquiſitely capable of ſentiment. Madame D'Ornance, as a woman, cannot be ſuppoſed to have the leaſt idea of it, though ſhe talks of nothing elſe.

I ſhall however, I think, except Julia from my general rule. I know not a being more governed by reaſon than this charming girl.

I am pleaſed with nothing but her; and in return, as you are not here, I may venture to ſay, ſhe is pleaſed with nothing but me. We have frequent converſations on what I call prejudices. Her reaſonings often perſuade me, and her example completes my conviction: every time I ſee her, I leave her more convinced that there may exiſt one woman ſuch as my imagination had painted. She is herſelf the beſt proof of the truth of her aſſertions.—St. Forlaix, whatever happens, ſhe muſt be yours. You will be the happieſt of mankind, if Heaven has deſtined you to poſſeſs her.

She

She careſſes me in a manner tender enough to make you jealous. She lays aſide with me that exceſſive modeſty, that ſcrupulous decorum, which is ſo much her character. I can even ſay ſhe grants me more favors than ſhe does you, but it is becauſe the little ſlut knows very well that I ſhall not abuſe them. I aſked her the other day the meaning of this excluſive privilege which ſhe granted me; and here is her reply:

"What is a mere play with you, would "be an important favor with a man for "whom I am intended. I would be "ſparing of favors to him, I would never "allow him too much, that he may al- "ways have ſomething to obtain. How "could I otherwiſe, when we were mar- "ried, give variety to my manner of plea-

" ſing? Nothing in me would be new " to him. He would be obliged to go " elſewhere to awaken his deſires; and it " is my wiſh, my huſband ſhould from " taſte, not duty, be mine alone, without " finding his conſtancy a ſacrifice.

" You will not now ſuſpect me of grant- " ing favors, even the moſt trifling, to " him who is deſtined for me. As to " you, Sir, you are not my lover; you " are a wife and virtuous friend, for whom " I feel every ſentiment of eſteem, of " tenderneſs, of veneration. This is my ex- " cuſe. I have a guide to which I aban- " don myſelf without fear, a heart which " my mother has educated in the practice " of every duty. I allow myſelf all for " which it does not reproach me, and I " have never yet been miſled by it."

Behold

Behold your Julia's manner of thinking. I have heard other women talk a language ſomething reſembling this, but it has been apparent they had learned their leſſon by rote. In her it is unſtudied and natural. She has really all the merit ſhe appears to have. My dear nephew, either marry her, or I will marry her myſelf.

But, jeſting apart, the affair of Corſange gives me great uneaſineſs, eſpecially on your ſiſter's account. Finiſh your affairs at Verſailles directly, and return to Paris, if with no other view than of embracing Monſ. D'Ornance for the firſt time.

He is every moment expected, and dies with impatience to ſee you. Conſider, that

time paſſes, that you muſt leave us the firſt of May, that you muſt be married firſt, and that Julia finds your abſence very tedious.

Adieu!

Your affectionate,

DE PRELE.

LET-

LETTER XXXVIII.

To Monſ. DE PRELE,

at Paris.

Verſailles.

WHAT I am going to tell you, my dear uncle, will not, I am afraid, leſſen yours or Monſ. D'Ornance's inquietude. What redoubles my chagrin is, my not having had time to aſk, and to purſue, your advice in a circumſtance wherein it was ſo neceſſary to me.

I was yeſterday with the Marquis of R—, where I had dined. The company were at play: they came to tell me, a man

had been to enquire for me, and had desired me to meet him in the park, near the great piece of water.

"What kind of man was he?"

"He appeared a servant, but wore a "sword; had a noble air, but was ill "dressed."

"What age?"

"About twenty."

"And his name?"

"He refused to tell it."

"And why did you not come to tell "me?"

"Or rather why did you not insist on "his coming in?" said the Marquis.

"He

"He would neither ſuffer one, nor the "other," ſaid the valet. "He only told "me, that in half an hour from that time "he begged of Monſ. De St. Forlaix to "be at the place he named, and to come "alone."

We knew not what to think of this man, and of his extraordinary behaviour. The Marquis perſuaded me not to go. Some other perſons preſent, who were ſo kind as to be intereſted for me, inſiſted at leaſt on accompanying me. I made them ſenſible, that neither of theſe precautions were neceſſary. Certainly a man who appointed me to meet him in the midſt of the park of Verſailles, could have no bad deſign. He might poſſibly have very important reaſons to be known only to myſelf. They acquieſced, and ſuffered me to go.

I ar-

I arrived at the place appointed, and had walked there a quarter of an hour without meeting the perſon I expected, when I heard myſelf called by my name. I ſaw a figure which was not altogether unknown to me, but of which I had only a confuſed recollection. The ſtranger ſuffered my perplexity to continue ſome time. He then regarded me attentively—

"Is it poſſible that you ſhould not know "me?"

The ſound of his voice at once determined me. I preſſed Corſange in my arms.

"Dear friend," ſaid I, "in what a ſtate "do I ſee you! What misfortune has hap-"pened to you? Tell me all. Relieve "me inſtantly from this inquietude."

"I will

"I will inform you," ſaid he: "never "had I ſuch occaſion for your friendſhip "as at this moment; I am going to give "you the ſtrongeſt proof of mine that "was ever given.

"I love your ſiſter, and am beloved by "her: you certainly are not ignorant of "this; our families attempted to tear us "from each other: but our hearts were too "ſtrongly united to ſubmit to ſo cruel a "ſeparation: we have continued to ſee "each other privately: we have renewed "our vows, and it is no longer in the "power of Heaven itſelf to break them.

"We live but for each other; never "will we conſent to form other ties. My "father diſdains this alliance: he exiles "me from my country — I know him, he

"hates

" hates me. He has once refuſed me, " he will never conſent to ſee me happy.— " St. Forlaix, my only hope is in you. " You ought to remember in what man- " ner I endeavored to ſerve you with my " ſiſter. I baniſhed all the ſcruples of a " brother, in order to bring you nearer " the end of your wiſhes. Your turn is " come: it is time to prove to me your " gratitude, if you are indeed capable of it."

" Ah! what can I do for you?" ſaid I; " tell me how to ſerve you: all that honor " permits, I will do. But you carry your " deſpair too far. Your worthy, your re- " ſpectable father, is not irritated againſt " you. He only wiſhes to ſee you pro- " perly fixed in the world.

" You are brave, you are fond of glory, " you are ſenſible to love: with all theſe " incen-

" incentives, you will ſoon be at the point " he wiſhes.

" Believe me, my friend; have patience; " the moſt ardent wiſhes do not lead us " the ſooneſt to happineſs. As to the reſt, " I repeat my queſtion, what is it you de- " ſire of me? If it is only to inſpire my " ſiſter with tenderneſs; you have endea- " vored to render me the ſame ſervice, " and it is that of all others which I ſhould " undertake with the greateſt pleaſure: " but ſhe already loves you; how can I " therefore, with her, be uſeful to you? " Is it your father you would wiſh me to " intereſt in your favor? you know the " difficulty of this attempt; however, I pro- " miſe you to make it, with all the warmth " you have a right to expect from your " friend."

He

He had appeared buried in thought during my whole converſation; he interrupted me with an air of indignation;

"It is not that which I aſk of you," ſaid he; "I know of how little ſervice all your "interceſſion would be"—then, repeating my firſt expreſſion, "*All that honor allows I will do!* Behold the conſtant lan"guage of ingrates! they remember per"fectly their duty, when that duty diſpenſes "with their being grateful!—When I con"ducted you privately myſelf into the "apartment of my ſiſter, when I took "care to remove all impertinent witneſſes "of your converſation, when I facilitated "to you the means of being happy, did "I coolly aſk myſelf whether *honor per*"*mitted* me to render you this ſervice?

"Did

" Did you ever aſk it of me? was I not
" the firſt to offer it? and, when I had
" made the offer, did you not accept it
" with eagerneſs, without conſidering whe-
" ther *honor permitted me* to ſerve you? If
" you did not make the uſe you might of
" this opportunity, was it my fault? did
" that depend on any but yourſelf?

" Ah! St. Forlaix, how little do you
" love your friends! At preſent, now you
" are yourſelf happy, the reflexion of your
" own happineſs abſorbs all other conſi-
" derations."

The ſurprize into which this ſhameful train of reaſoning had thrown me was ſo great, as to take from me the power of words, which I did not ſoon recover.

As

As ſoon as I came a little to myſelf, I caſt my eyes on Corſange. Fury animated his whole countenance; he wept, he bit his lips, all his nerves were convulſed.

"What ſervices," ſaid I, "am I to ſup-
"poſe you expect of me, ſince you re-
"mind me of ſuch as you now mention?
"But tell me, Corſange, how is it poſſible
"for me to ſerve you, if I am ignorant of
"what you deſire?"

He regarded me earneſtly at theſe words; he again wept, but they appeared relenting tears. His air implored compaſſion.

"Pardon, pardon," ſaid he, throwing himſelf on my neck, and embracing me tenderly, "pardon what I have ſaid, and
"much more what I am going to aſk of
"you.

" you. O, my dear St. Forlaix! how
" happy you are! You may form wiſhes,
" becauſe you are in a ſituation to expect
" they will be accompliſhed. Your friend
" has the ſame deſires, but he has not the
" ſame means of fulfilling them. You
" love *my* ſiſter, and you are ſoon going to
" marry her: I adore *yours*, and ſhe is re-
" fuſed me; my father does not feel that
" this refuſal overwhelms me, and renders
" me incapable of all which he expects of
" me. If he will grant me her, fired by
" ſo ineſtimable a gift, I ſhall do from
" gratitude all he expects me to do from
" duty. But 'tis in vain to hope; he is
" inſenſible, and will be ever ſo, to this
" conſideration. I have therefore no lon-
" ger any dependance, to ſatisfy deſires ſo
" violent as mine, except on myſelf, and
" her who is the object of them. It will
" never be in the boſom of a cruel unpity-

" ing

" ing family, that we ſhall ſee our felicity
" take root. We muſt then leave them
" for ſome time — we muſt fly —"

My ſoul, ſuſpended during ſome time, was overwhelmed by this laſt blow. I ſcarce had force left ſufficient to expreſs to this young man all the indignation which I felt at this propoſal.

" You muſt fly?" ſaid I after a moment's ſilence: " that is to ſay, you wiſh
" to render me an accomplice in the diſ-
" honor with which you mean to cover
" my family? You aſk more; you expect
" me to aſſiſt you in this attempt, that
" the part which I have in ſo deteſtable
" an enterprize may ſkreen you from the
" puniſhment you would merit, and that
" the ignominy may fall on me alone.
" Even with the baſe and criminal ſenti-
" ments

"ments you muſt have had to form ſuch "a deſign, paſſion muſt have extremely "blinded you; ſhe muſt have extinguiſh-"ed every ſpark of reaſon, to make you "hope I ſhould favor your views, or even "that I would ſuffer them."

"O, St. Forlaix! O, my friend!" interrupted he — a look which I darted at him made him ſee how ill placed this name was—

"I was wrong in calling you my friend!" ſaid he with an ironical air; "pardon me "this expreſſion. As you ought to be, "and I expected to find you, my friend, "it was eaſy to carry my miſtake ſo far "as to believe you ſo. But, under what-"ever title it is, I deſire you to hear me "with tranquillity; I at leaſt deſerve this "favor.—You talk to me of the diſhonor "of your family; it was this falſe idea alone

"which

" which made me uſe ſo much precau-
" tion in explaining myſelf. In what
" conſiſts this diſhonor? Not, you will
" allow, in our alliance. If *my* ſiſter is
" worthy of you, am I not equally ſo of
" *yours?* Conſider, that it is marriage to
" which I aſpire. I only deſire to have
" Henrietta in my power, to make her
" my wife. As ſoon as ſhe is ſo, both
" our families will infallibly approve our
" union. By your own confeſſion, they
" wiſh it, and only endeavor to retard it.
" If we form this tender connexion in
" ſpite of them, it will be only a trifling
" deviation from their own views.

" O, my dear St. Forlaix! how could
" you think I would cover you with in-
" famy! you, whom I eſteem, whom I
" reſpect, whom I love, more than any
" being on earth, except your adorable
" ſiſter?

" ſiſter? Would not your ſhame be hers?
" would it not reflect more on her than
" on you? Can you believe that Corſange,
" that the ſon of Monſ. D'Ornance, would
" unite himſelf to a woman who was diſ-
" honored, even if by himſelf? You too
" well know our family, to ſuſpect any
" one who belongs to it of a conduct ſo
" unworthy.

" But what do I ſay? You expreſs ſuſpi-
" cions of me much more degrading!
" *I only endeavor to make the ſhame fall*
" *on you of an attempt which I ſhould have*
" *executed by myſelf! I wiſh to ſhreen my-*
" *ſelf from puniſhments, by the ſanction of*
" *your name!*—St. Forlaix, you know little
" of me. Too much warmth has prevent-
" ed you from perfectly underſtanding my
" deſign.

and ſeducing me. I conſidered a moment whether it was not poſſible to reconcile his deſigns with my own honor; I went even ſo far as to fancy he was in the right, and that prejudice alone carried me to oppoſe him. Theſe illuſive ideas however ſoon vaniſhed: the agitation of my mind appeared even on my countenance.

"Corſange," cried I, with the ſofteſt air I could aſſume, "I have already told "you, you were blinded by your deſires; "and every thing confirms me in it: I "am well convinced you did not foreſee "the fatal conſequences which muſt inevi- "tably follow the execution of your pro- "ject. This is the moſt favorable idea "I can form of you: if it in ſome de- "gree juſtifies you, it increaſes ſo much "the more the condemnation of your de- "ſigns: reflect, therefore; conſider the

"importance

" importance of the advice I have given
" you. Renounce this raſh undertaking,
" and ſpeak of it to me no more.

" You muſt have great dependance on
" my friendſhip, to make me ſuch an over-
" ture, and not to be afraid of my in-
" forming my family. You would be
" then undone for ever. But your con-
" fidence ſhall not be betrayed. I will
" even act in the very contrary manner.

" *Monſ. D'Ornance* is undoubtedly ir-
" ritated againſt you: it certainly is not
" with his permiſſion you are here. I
" promiſe you to calm his anger. How-
" ever great his inflexibility may be, I take
" it on myſelf to reſtore you to his favor,
" on condition, only, that you baniſh from
" your heart theſe fooliſh and chimerical

" ideas, to fill it once more with the love
" of duty and of virtue. Adieu!

" Come to me to-morrow morning with
" more reaſonable ſentiments, and you
" may expect every thing of me; I will
" then call myſelf your friend, and ſhall
" call myſelf ſo with pleaſure."

I preſſed his hand, and left him without waiting his reply.

He ſtopped me, regarded me with an inſulting ſmile, and ſaid, in a tone of voice the moſt contemptuous and ſatirical that can be conceived, " Monſ. St. Forlaix
" has reaſon to look upon me as the moſt
" imprudent of mankind, if he ſuppoſes
" I have truſted him without having made
" the deepeſt reflections, without having
" taken the moſt infallible precautions!
" I ſhould

" I ſhould have been without doubt right
" in having the greateſt confidence in you:
" the manner in which you have juſt re-
" ceived the propoſition I have made to
" you, proves how well placed it would
" have been! I will however confeſs to
" you, that I ſhould not have delivered
" myſelf and my ſecret ſo inconſiderately
" into your hands, if I had thought either
" one or the other ran any riſk. I at firſt
" endeavored to ſoften you, becauſe, when
" our friendſhip began, I fancied I diſ-
" covered your heart had ſenſibility; I ſee
" I was deceived, and I beg your pardon.
" I was wrong to take this road, ſince
" it does not lead to a ſoul like yours:
" but be aſſured I have not yet loſt all
" hope of obtaining of you what I de-
" mand.

" I will acquaint you with the expe-
" dient I ſhall make uſe of.

" You imagine you ſhall eſpouſe my " ſiſter: this is the aim of all your de- " ſires: every thing concurs to favor you. " You are beloved by her. Your family " deſire this union as warmly as yourſelf. " You have the conſent of both her " parents. I congratulate you on it. " You ſee no obſtacle to your happineſs. " It is however on all theſe circumſtances " I found my deſign of preventing the " marriage which appears to you ſo cer- " tain. You ſhall never eſpouſe her " without my conſent, and I will never " conſent till you ſatisfy me."

You will judge, my dear uncle, that this ridiculous aſſertion produced on my ſide only a ſmile of diſdain. It deſerved no more, and I was preparing to quit this raſh

raſh man without replying, when he continued thus:

" You ſmile, Sir; 'tis what I expected
" of you. I meant to touch your pride,
" in order to humble it the more. You
" are then firmly convinced, Sir, that you
" have no occaſion for my conſent in or-
" der to marry? I know that in point of
" law you have not. But it is not that
" way I ſhall attack you. I ſhall take a
" method more ſuitable to the profeſſion
" we have both embraced. Have the
" goodneſs to follow me immediately out
" of this park, into ſome more retired
" place. You are a man of honor, and
" will not refuſe me what I demand.

" You will judge now, Sir, whether
" my laſt reſource is an effectual one, or

" not; and whether what I have been
" ſaying is ſo very ridiculous. I ſhall
" prevent your marriage, whatever is the
" event of our combat, either by cauſing
" you to fall by my hand, or by falling
" by yours. I riſk nothing; nobody here
" knows me. If I periſh, I am in deſpair,
" and death to me will be far from an
" unwelcome gueſt. If you kill me, you
" alone will ſuffer. You cannot expect
" that my ſiſter will eſpouſe the murderer
" of her brother; and I have taken pre-
" cautions which will make it impoſſible
" it ſhould remain unknown. Conſult
" your heart; and remember, that to
" enſure your own happineſs, you muſt
" begin by enſuring mine."

I was confounded; I could not reply; I felt too ſtrongly that this once he was right.

fight. I was desirous in my turn to take the style of affection, and endeavor to make him hear reason.

"My dear Corsange," said I—

"I understand you," interrupted he: "but a truce with words, I will hear no "more; the two only replies you have "now to make, are more significant than "a thousand arguments. Give me what "I demand, with your word of honor "not to oppose my designs; or follow "me."

Though suffocated with rage, I yet endeavored to moderate myself. "I shall "never think myself dishonored," said I, "by refusing to fight with a madman. "I have given, and I shall always know "how to give, sufficient proofs of courage,

" to prevent an accident like this from " bringing it into queſtion."

" Deſpicable evaſion!" ſaid Corſange, with fury in his air: " but I ap- " prehend nothing; I will follow you " every where, and only wait till we meet " in public, to load you with inſults ſo " outrageous as ſhall not allow you to " decline taking vengeance for them. " You will then have no choice. I ſhall " ruin myſelf perhaps, but at leaſt I ſhall " be certain of having ruined you."

At this moment the Marquis of R— and his friends, who had followed and obſerved us at a diſtance, ſeeing the converſation grow warm, thought they ought to approach. Corſange perceived them firſt. He had juſt time enough to ſay to me, before they were near enough to hear us,

" St.

" St. Forlaix, you have no time to
" loſe; you have courage, and will not
" refuſe me the ſatisfaction I demand,
" ſince it is agreable to all the laws of
" honor. I have made you ſufficiently
" underſtand that I will force you to it
" by ſome means or other: you cannot
" avoid it. Meet me therefore to-morrow
" at ſix o'clock in the morning, on the
" outſide of the park, near Trianon. I
" will have a poſt-chaiſe ready; you will
" have on your ſide whatever is neceſſary
" to ſecure the victor from every ill con-
" ſequence. You are a gentleman; there-
" fore I have no violence to fear from
" you. You will do all that this name
" impoſes on you!"

I thought, my dear Sir, I ought to promiſe him — " Yes," ſaid I, " I give
" you my word of honor —"

" I receive

"I receive it," replied he, preſſing my hand. He then left me, with an air of perfect ſatisfaction and tranquillity.

I haſtened, as ſoon as he had *left me*, to meet my friends. They were uneaſy on my account: I calmed their fears by general anſwers.

I went directly home, to write you this detail. I ſent off my valet de chambre with my letter. He returned, in half an hour, covered with blood. He *told me*, four ſoldiers had attacked him, going out of the town; had put him in that condition, and forced my packet from him. I ſuſpected the author of this inſult: but how ſhould I have been able to puniſh him? I might have obliged him to appear. He undoubtedly wiſhed this; but it was

what

what I moſt endeavored to avoid. I ſtifled my reſentment, and this morning I have again ſitten down to write you this letter, which I ſhall contrive to ſend you from a neighbouring houſe.

But the hour of our appointment draws near: I muſt keep it. What ſhall I do? I know not what to determine: ſhall I ſtab him who was once my friend? Alas! as he has cruelly ſaid, "Julia will never eſpouſe the murderer of her brother!"

To employ violent means, is a thing impoſſible, even if I had not given my word of honor to the contrary. His crime merits puniſhments, the ſhame of which would fall on his family. And is not the honor of this family mine? can I conſent to diſhonor my ſiſter? you cannot believe me capable of ſuch a thought: what part

am I then to act? Pity, dear Sir, this dreadful perplexity. I will go.

Though the moment is so near, Heaven may, perhaps, before it arrives, inspire me with some means to avoid the miseries which threaten us all.

Adieu!

St. Forlaix.

LET-

LETTER XXXIX.

To Monſ. De Prele,
at Paris.

Caſtle of Ornance.

I NO longer, Sir, reckon on having a ſon. A parent's weakneſs, a ſentiment I cannot explain, forced me to ſeek him in ſpite of myſelf.

I have been unable to diſcover his retreat. He flies me with diligence ſuperior to that I have uſed to find him. He fears his father, even more than I regret my child.

He

He has abandoned every duty, I therefore abandon him.

He who could fly me, who could eſcape from under my very eye, who could, without pity for what I muſt feel, tear himſelf from my parental arms, cannot be my ſon; I no longer have one.

The ingrate has ſuppoſed my heart would ſuffer nothing from his thus cruelly abſenting himſelf—my fond heart wiſhed to make him great—he reſolved to be nothing—let me therefore forget him—I have a daughter—a daughter tenderly beloved, and who merits to be ſo:—it is ſhe who is truly of my blood. Her brother does not deſerve to retard her happineſs one moment. Let us haſten it, Sir; and if ſome one muſt ſuffer for the conduct of an unhappy creature, let me ſuffer alone.

alone. I am already conſoled. The happineſs of my Julia will pour balm into my wounds. She alone can repair my loſs.

I entreat you, Sir, to take care that all is ready for your nephew's marriage in eight days at the lateſt. I ſhall arrive the preceding evening; nothing ſhall detain me here beyond that time. I ſhall hope to partake long the happineſs of the married pair.

I ſhall ſoon ſatisfy the impatient deſire I have to ſee Monſ. St. Forlaix. What regret does this young man excite in my ſoul! I cannot prevent myſelf from reflecting with concern that I might have been all which he is; that I have a ſon who at leaſt ought to emulate, to attempt to equal him: and nothing of all this exiſts! But I have one hope; he may have

have children who will reſemble him, who will be worthy of him. Theſe children will be alſo mine. This idea gives me conſolation.

I ſet out the day after to-morrow for Charcey: I ſhall be obliged to ſtay there till the evening before the marriage. Perhaps Madame D'Ornance will wiſh to engage you to defer the marriage till ſhe has news of her ſon; but I entreat you to tell her, that theſe are my orders, and that ſhe will extremely diſoblige me if ſhe does not conform to them.

It is ſhe, Sir, who has ruined this ſon; ſhe has loved, ſhe ſtill loves him, to a deſtructive exceſs; his heart has been corrupted by her falſe indulgence. This is the only ſorrow ſhe ever cauſed me, but it is a ſevere one.—I will not write to her; I ſhould

I ſhould be ſorry to afflict her, and I fear I cannot command myſelf. Do me the favor therefore to execute this commiſſion to her.

Adieu!

I am, &c.

D'ORNANCE.

LET-

LETTER XL.

To Monſ. De Prele,
at Paris.

Verſailles.

I HASTEN, Sir, to deliver you from the inquietude you could not avoid feeling; I went this morning to the rendezvous preſcribed, as I told you I intended.

I ſaw no poſt-chaiſe, I met no human being. I waited, impatiently enough, till eight o'clock. I then examined all the neighbouring ground with my valet de chambre,

chambre, leſt I ſhould have miſtaken the place, though Corſange had very particularly deſcribed it to me. My ſearch was in vain. I was ſorry for it, as I had determined how to act. I ſhould have done nothing contrary either to friendſhip, to my honor, or intereſt. I was certain of not loſing my temper, and, I am ſure, in that ſtate of mind, of being able to diſarm Corſange. I ſhould have ſeized, and conducted him to you; the ſhame and confuſion he muſt have felt, would infallibly have corrected him for ever.

All my projects are rendered abortive by his abſence. I know not to what I am to attribute it. He certainly does not want courage. He is doubtleſs aſhamed of his deſigns, and will return of himſelf to M—. Write, I entreat you, my dear uncle, to his father: I am the only per-

ſon offended, and I pardon him. Endeavor to render Monſ. D'Ornance as indulgent. Corſange has only erred from raſhneſs; and this defect, the common attendant on youth, goes off with that, and often much ſooner. The indiſcreet ſtep he has taken, points out very nearly all that is wanting to his becoming a worthy man.

He has paſſions extremely lively; it is only neceſſary to turn thoſe paſſions to the ſide of honor, to render him more illuſtrious than thoſe who have been always coldly virtuous.

With this young man, it is eaſy to ſucceed, if you will take the trouble to lead him in his calmer moments. It depends on you, my dear Sir, to obtain of Monſ. D'Ornance, that he will relax ſomething of his firmneſs.

I for-

I forgot to tell you, that as we returned from the rendezvous, we perceived at a diſtance the four ſoldiers who yeſterday attacked my valet de chambre; they ſeemed to come from behind an old ruined houſe: they fled ſo ſwiftly on our approach, that we had not time to ſeize them. I ſuppoſe theſe villians were hid there in order to attempt ſome wicked action, and that, ſeeing me with my valet de chambre, they dreaded my vengeance. This idea diſſipated the ſuſpicion I had before entertained of their being employed by Corſange. Their only view in taking the packet from my valet, has without doubt been to commit a robbery. However this may be, I have heard nothing ſince. The project is, I ſuppoſe, at an end.

Be ſo obliging as to write me word what Monſ. D'Ornance thinks of this tranſaction,

what day he has fixed for my marriage, and when he is expected at Paris.

I hope I ſhall have completed my buſineſs, and that I ſhall be there in three days.

Adieu!

ST. FORLAIX.

LET-

LETTER XLI.

To Monſ. ST. FORLAIX,
at Verſailles.

Paris.

NOTWITHSTANDING the deſire we all have to find Corſange, I am much better pleaſed he did not keep his appointment. Not becauſe I doubt your addreſs in diſarming thoſe you encounter; but becauſe the ſureſt way, in ſuch affairs, is not to meet at all. The event would probably have been as fatal, as your ſituation was perplexing.

Let what will be the conſequence of this affair, I wiſh it was of no more importance to his father than it is to me. Your marriage is however fixed for Monday next: on Sunday evening you will ſee Monſ. D'Ornance.

I went yeſterday to viſit a certain perſon, of whom I believe you now never think, but who notwithſtanding entertained me two hours about you — this certain perſon is Madame D'Eſſ—. I went, as I ought, to thank her for her ſervices. Scarce had the ſervant announced me, when ſhe ran to me with open arms.

" Ah! 'tis Monſ. De Prele," ſaid ſhe ſmiling graciouſly; " 'tis the uncle of my " little Colonel. I am certainly enchanted " to ſee you; but you have a nephew

" with whom I am extremely diſcontented.
" 'Tis a little ingrate, a little ill-bred chit,
" who, to ſupply the place of all good
" qualities, is only charming, and 'tis that
" is the reaſon we pardon him."

" I have ſcarce ſeen him ſince he has
" been a Colonel. I think he came once
" to ſee me; but it was like the ſhooting
" of a ſtar; he ſaid three words, and was
" gone. He came again, but it was juſt
" at the time when he knew I had com-
" pany.

" Is this the manner in which he ought
" to have thanked me?

" He knows how much I wiſh his good,
" and he is by no means grateful. I
" have ſtill a thouſand offers of ſervice to
" make him. He knows the world very

"little this nephew of yours, Monſ. De
"Prele; I beg of you to chide him ſeverely
"for me."

I promiſed her ſolemnly I would: ſo look on yourſelf as well chid.

The Marſhaleſs was at play when ſhe ſaid this, but her play ſeemed to intereſt her very little. She pretended to be in an ill humor, that the company might leave us more at liberty.

She then laviſhed a thouſand encomiums on you, as many careſſes on me, and the converſation became ſerious.

"Monſ. De Prele," ſaid ſhe, "you ſee
"I think very well of our little Colonel;
"but does he merit it? is he diſcreet?

I ſhould

"I ſhould think ſo, he has very much that "appearance; and yet they ſay in the world "he is about being guilty of a folly, and "a very ridiculous one; that he is going "to marry that little D'Ornance. This "is contrary to all common ſenſe, Monſ. "De Prele; it is not poſſible to conceive "it. I am aſtoniſhed, a man like you, "who have ſeen the world, and know it "perfectly, can ſuffer ſuch things."

"And why, Madam, is this marriage "ſo very ridiculous?"

"Indeed? do you too think of it? St. "Forlaix is a Colonel, muſt join his "regiment: and who is to introduce his "wife into the world? ſomebody muſt "undertake it, and this ſomebody will, I "ſuppoſe, be young and amiable, he will "acquire right with it will not be

" uſe, or if you pleaſe to abuſe; and the " poor huſband — he will be food for " powder all this time."

" But, Madam, permit me to aſk you " what occaſion there is for Mademoiſelle " D'Ornance to have any man to introduce " her into the world, when ſhe is married? " and on what do you found your idea " that this ſuppoſed perſon muſt be young " and amiable, and aſſume rights ?"

" What neceſſity? and on what do I " found my idea? On her being a girl, and " having been ſhut up; on her being juſt " come out of a convent, and a prude. I " know all this, Monſ. De Prele: a girl " who has ſeen nothing dies to ſee all at " a time. She ſucceeds, but 'tis always " at her huſband's expence. An officer, " who has only three or four months in " the

" the year to give to his wife, ought to
" chuſe a widow, one who is become ſolid;
" one who, if ſhe has been imprudent,
" is on the return; not a raw ignorant
" girl like this, and a prude too —"

" But, Madam, he loves her."

" Yes, indeed, I don't doubt of all that:
" a fine reaſon truly! he loves her! does
" not ſhe tell you too, ſhe loves him?
" And ſuppoſe this true, how long would
" it laſt? a month, perhaps! All muſt have
" an end, and love ſooner than any thing.
" After marriage he will grow tired, and ſhe
" too. If ſhe wiſhes to love him longer, is
" ſhe certain it is in her power? or is ſhe
" ſure of pleaſing him, without experience,
" without being well inſtructed in anything?
" I confeſs to you ingenuouſly, this in-
" ſignificant girl diſpleaſes me to death."

" I agree with you, Madam, that there
" is nothing ſhe leſs reſembles than a
" woman *well inſtructed.* But what would
" you have him do? His heart is hers.
" If his love ſhould laſt as little a time
" as you ſuppoſe, yet I am ſure you will
" agree with me, that it requires to be
" ſatisfied. He loves ardently; muſt he
" renounce all hope?"

" The poor man! his diſtemper is deſ-
" perate indeed!—Mademoiſelle D'Or-
" nance is really a very precious treaſure!
" Nothing can compenſate to him for ſuch
" a loſs. Is not this true? Hear me,
" Monſ. De Prele; there are a thouſand
" reaſonable women, who would have the
" greateſt pleaſure in making this young
" man happy, who would ſacrifice much
" to do it."

" Do

" Do you believe, Madam, there are ſo
" great a number? I do not think, for my
" part, that a woman who is what they
" call, on the return, from ſome things,
" would go to attach herſelf to a young
" man who may probably not hold to all
" he promiſes.

" I will ſuppoſe you, Madam: you are
" a widow; you have been ſome time in
" the world; you have intereſt, you have
" riches; in ſhort, you are preciſely in the
" ſituation of the women you ſeem to chuſe
" for St. Forlaix. You, for example;
" I don't believe you would make ſuch a
" ſacrifice in his favor as your liberty.
" Have I not reaſon to think of others
" what I do of you?"

" Of me? of me, Monſ. De Prele?—
" and why ſhould I be ſo diſtant from

" ſuch a deſign, as you have imagined?
" I love him. I have told you ſo; I in-
" tereſt myſelf extremely for him, and that
" might extend even to what you mention.
" This affair ſeems to me very poſſible.
" There are only a few circumſtances which
" might interfere — and pray — ſhould I
" be ſo bad a match for him, Monſ. De
" Prele? tell me what you think of it?"

" I think, Madam, that you would do
" him great honor; you have, as I have
" already obſerved, the very qualities
" which you deſire in her whom you
" would wiſh him to marry. I cannot
" doubt of my nephew's accepting with
" pleaſure ſo advantageous a propoſal, if
" he conſulted only his reaſon; but it is this
" unfortunate love of his that traverſes
" our deſigns. Things are beſides ex-
" tremely advanced with Monſ. D'Or-
" nance —

" nance — it will not be eaſy to break
" off — one may however ſee what is to
" be done — one may try —"

" Yes, pray do that, Monſ. De Prele:
" I engage to you, that this ſcheme is
" practicable as well as convenient for
" him — I ſhould almoſt repent of having
" made him a Colonel, if I thought it was
" for this little affected pride."

" We muſt ſee, Madam. But firſt to
" anſwer your complaints of him; I can
" venture to aſſure you, that his affairs
" alone have caused what you call negli-
" gence; and I am confident that, in a
" ſhort time, married or not, he will come
" himſelf to clear it for the reaſons
" of his gratitude."

The

This ſpeech procured me a thouſand careſſes, and I left her.

Do you feel yourſelf in a diſpoſition to fulfil the engagements which I have made for you?

You ſee you may contract a marriage of the firſt diſtinction, if you will only prefer the charming Marſhaleſs D'Eſſ— to this little D'Ornance, as ſhe calls her.

You will have one advantage with her, that of making all your friends Colonels; which will be an exceedingly agreable circumſtance.

But to leave jeſting: Julia finds your abſence very long. She every day loves you more tenderly, and is herſelf every

day more amiable. Our manner of thinking grows more and more alike. We begin to meet half way: that is to ſay, ſhe begins to think it more dangerous, as well as more unhappy, to contract an attachment, than to live in indifference.

She habituates herſelf by degrees to regard as prejudices many ſentiments on which women value themſelves; but ſhe will not be brought abſolutely to deny their exiſtence. She has even gone ſo far as to perſuade me, that there are women, and thoſe in great number, who are much ſuperior to men in ſentiment; that they are in general more ſuſceptible of it; and that it depends on themſelves only, to excel, whenever this is the queſtion, the moment they will leave off theſe eternal pretenſions.

Lown

I own to you, it was this unfortunate rage which firſt ruined women in my good opinion. Your Julia begins to reconcile me to them.

I believe her to be on bad terms with your ſiſter. She did not dare to aſk me after her, leſt I ſhould remark this miſunderſtanding; and I obſerve ſhe never ſpeaks of having heard from her.

Henrietta muſt be culpable indeed, if ſhe is unable to bear the luſtre of Julia's virtues: we ſhall doubtleſs ſoon ſee an explanation of all this; I am afraid it will be a very fatal one.

Adieu! As I am in ſome doubt whether you will accept the offers of Madame D'Eſſ—,

D'Eſſ—, I ſhall go on in my train with Madame D'Ornance. Beſides, I fancy the Marſhaleſs miſtakes her real ſentiments; if I know her, ſhe is a woman to prefer an *acknowledgement* to a marriage.

Your affectionate,

DE PRELE.

LET-

LETTER XLII.

To Madame ST. FORLAIX,

at St. Forlaix.

Paris.

TO-MORROW, Madam, Heaven will join for ever Mademoiſelle D'Ornance and your ſon, in the moſt tender and ſacred ties. This day, which will decide the happineſs of my future life with her, preſages nothing but felicity. The qualities of her underſtanding, of her heart, of her whole perſon, will render her always new, and make her every day more dear to me.

I have

I have then no longer any obſtacle to apprehend! To-morrow my happineſs will be at the height, and in eight days I ſhall join my regiment.

This abſence from all I love will undoubtedly be very painful to my heart; but the motive that cauſes it is ſo noble, is a duty of which I feel ſo ſtrongly the extent and the importance, that it cannot avoid compenſating for it.

We have not yet heard any thing of Corſange: I preſume he only waits the feſtivities of our nuptials, which will naturally diſpoſe all hearts to joy and indulgence, to come and implore pardon. He will eaſily obtain mine, great as the injury was which he attempted to do me. But his father will poſſibly be more rigorous. We will, however,

however, apply ourſelves with ſuch ardor to recall his tenderneſs, that he will be compelled to open his heart to affection and forgiveneſs.

Every body is of opinion, that Corſange, after the ſcene which paſſed at Verſailles, returned to hide himſelf ſomewhere in the neighbourhood of St. Forlaix. My uncle has no doubt of his maintaining a ſecret correſpondence with my ſiſter. There is not, however, the leaſt appearance of this. My uncle ought to conſider your conſtant care, and the attention with which you have obſerved all her actions.

Monſ. D'Ornance has not written to us. He has, I ſuppoſe, been unſucceſsful in his enquiries. We expect him this evening at Paris. My impatience at leaſt makes me hope it. He has promiſed me; all is ready; and

and love tells me he makes us expect too long.

As ſoon as the ceremony is over, Monſ. De Prele intends to return to St. Forlaix, as you deſired. His preſence would be very agreable to us; but we know how neceſſary he is to you, and that conſideration ſilences our wiſhes.

Adieu! Madam! My heart expands with delight, with an exceſs of pleaſure the moſt pure and delicious. Never did I feel tranſports like thoſe I now experience. My ſoul has ſcarce powers to ſupport, to comprehend — to-morrow, my deareſt Madam, to-morrow — never was I at the eve of a day ſo happy — you connot conceive my felicity — it is too exceſſive to make it poſſible even for myſelf to have a perfect idea of it.

You

You will augment my happineſs, Madam, if you deign to partake it. Tell me once more you ſee it with pleaſure; this will be to bleſs me, to render it eternal.

I have the honor to be, &c.

ST. FORLAIX.

LET-

LETTER XLIII.

To Madame ST. FORLAIX,
at St. Forlaix.

Paris.

ALAS! Madam, how far are you from expecting the miſeries of which I am going to make you the ſhocking detail. How different will this letter be, from that which I hoped this day to have written you.

But you doubtleſs already know the reaſon I have to complain. Tell me then what are theſe cruel events which have deſtroyed my happineſs at the very eve of its exiſtence? Monſ. D'Ornance, who is not far

far diſtant from you, cannot have left you in ignorance of them.

Let him then alſo inform me of them, if he does not wiſh to ſee me expire under the torture of uncertainty. Or have ſo much compaſſion for me, Madam, as to inform me yourſelf of the particulars of my unhappineſs. I cannot avoid fancying my misfortune would be a thouſand times leſs terrible, if I knew the full extent of it.

We were laſt night at table; every one of the company were inebriated with love, and with joy: pleaſure brightened every countenance, every eye ſparkled with convivial delight; every ſad, and even every ſerious idea, had given place to the moſt unbounded gaiety. All that was wanting to make us perfectly happy was the father of my lovely wife — I already called her by

by that tender name — and am commanded to renounce it for ever!

A valet, in Monſ. D'Ornance's livery, deſired to ſpeak with his lady alone. He was ordered to enter immediately, he was overwhelmed with our queſtions.

"Do you come from Monſ. D'Ornance? "How does he do? Has any thing hap- "pened to him? Will he come?"

"No, Gentlemen, he will not come." This was his only reply.

Madame D'Ornance made him paſs with her into another apartment, and left us in the moſt alarming inquietude. Our fears redoubled when, half an hour after, ſhe ſent to ſpeak with Julia. We could ſcarce be prevailed on to ſuffer her to leave the

room before we were ourſelves relieved from our painful uncertainty. It was, however, neceſſary to obey. We exhauſted our minds in idle conjectures, but nothing that we could imagine gave us the leaſt ſatiſfaction.

Some time after, they came to tell us from Madame D'Ornance and her daughter, "that they were in deſpair to leave the "company in this manner, but that very "important affairs would prevent them "from appearing again all the evening."

Many excuſes, added to this, did not at all diminiſh our perplexity. Every one returned home, filled with inquietude and ſadneſs. I remained, with my uncle, in hopes of learning, when we were alone, the misfortune which I had to apprehend. I preſented myſelf at the door of Madame D'Ornance's

D'Ornance's apartment. It was guarded by the ſame valet, who told me, theſe ladies had given abſolute orders not to admit even me. I was obliged to return without learning more. Nothing could equal my deſpair. I wept, and all the friendſhip my uncle has for me was inſufficient to conſole me.

After we were returned home, Monſ. De Prele began to give orders for his baggage to be got ready.

" My dear nephew," ſaid he, " I fore-
" ſee your marriage is at leaſt retarded,
" though I am ignorant of the cauſe:
" perhaps it is broke for ever. Endeavor
" to prepare yourſelf for this cruel event.
" If it does not happen, your joy will be
" only the more lively."

I was not in a ſtate of mind to liſten to his counſels. His preparations only ſerved to embitter my affliction. One muſt be a philoſopher like him, and, above all, have paſſed, like him, the age of the paſſions, to know how to reconcile one's heart to the accidents of life. I neither wiſhed, nor had the power, to do any thing but lament. I was notwithſtanding ignorant of the nature of my misfortunes.

At the end of a night the moſt cruel that can be conceived, a packet was yeſterday morning brought me from Monſ. D'Ornance; my heart beat in opening the ſeal. I read it with rapidity, without underſtanding a word. My uncle was obliged to read it to me himſelf, and I could not then believe what I heard. It

was

was however ſufficient to convince me of my misfortune.

The letter was addreſſed to Monſ. De Prele, and contained the following words:

LETTER XLIV.

" To Monſ. DE PRELE, at Paris.

" SIR, Charcey.

" REASONS as invincible as they " are cruel force me to retract the word " I had given you; Monſ. St. Forlaix " muſt think no more of my daughter. " What I have often ſaid to you of my " eſteem for him, ought to perſuade you " that nothing but an inſurmountable ob- " ſtacle could prevent a marriage ſo earneſt- " ly deſired. May theſe fatal reaſons never " be diſcovered!

" But, if you ſhould ever learn them, " you will congratulate yourſelf, and praiſe " my delicacy, as much as Monſ. St. For- " laix will perhaps complain of my ca- " price.

" Never, Sir, never, can they be united; " engage your nephew therefore to form " other ties: he has a right to aſpire to " the moſt diſtinguiſhed employments. " This event, which will at firſt afflict his " heart, will ſoon open to him the road " of fortune.

" My wife and daughter will have left " Paris when you receive this; you will " in vain attempt to ſee them. They will " in a ſhort time, as well as myſelf, be " unknown and forgot, ſeparated from " the reſt of the earth. May we ſoon be

" all

" all buried together in its parental bo-
" ſom!

" Adieu! Sir! Ceaſe to wiſh for, and
" do not fail to pity me.

" D'ORNANCE."

You will judge, Madam, what became of me at reading this cruel letter, which deprived me for ever of all hope, without explaining to me his motives for a conduct which appeared ſo ſtrange. His wife and daughter, he ſaid, were no longer in Paris. I would not believe him. I dreſſed myſelf in haſte.

" Do what you pleaſe," ſaid Monſ. De Prele. " In your preſent ſituation, all
" which can for a moment render it leſs

" terrible ought to be granted you. As " for me, I can no longer be uſeful to you. " I can only give you weak and ineffectual " conſolations. You know how neceſſary " my preſence is at St. Forlaix. I ſhall " alſo be able to ſerve you better with " Monſ. D'Ornance, when in his neigh- " bourhood. Write me all the diſcoveries " you make. You hope to find Madame " D'Ornance ſtill here. Go to her houſe: " but, I will venture to aſſure you, your " purſuit will be vain. Her huſband is " not capable of impoſing on you. I " pity you, becauſe I feel how much you " loſe in loſing Julia. Join your regiment " as ſoon as poſſible. The noiſe of arms " can alone ſilence the voice of ſorrow in " a ſoul like yours."

I was not able to hear more. I claſped my uncle in my arms; he went out, ba-

thed

thed with my tears. I flew inſtantly to the houſe of Madame D'Ornance. She was not there; ſhe had left Paris, about three hours, with the meſſenger who brought theſe letters.

" Heavens!" cried I, " I might have " hindered this fatal flight if I had fore- " ſeen it. Why did this barbarous man " only write to me after my misfortune " was compleated? By what refinement " of cruelty has he prevented my know- " ing of Julia what it is which deprives " me of her? I ſhould then at leaſt have " embraced her for the laſt time. Alas! " yeſterday!— had I yeſterday known this, " it was not too late; they knew it, and " yet they refuſed to ſee me. All the " world then have conſpired to torture my " heart! And my uncle too — was not " he informed?— he was ſo tranquil;

" he is gone; he alſo mocks my wretched-
" neſs!"

Thus my fooliſh ſorrow, without a cauſe, without reflection, accuſed the whole univerſe.

An idea however at length ſtruck me, which I ſeized with ardor. " They left " Paris only this morning," ſaid I to myſelf: " they cannot yet be got far; I may " hope to overtake them."

I returned haſtily to my houſe, ordered my horſe to be ſaddled, and flew to ſeek them.

I had already gone as far as hope could lead me, and had diſcovered nothing.

I was returning ſlowly, abſorbed in grief, without knowing what road I took. My horſe,

horſe, who was unacquainted with that I happened to chuſe, had ſtrayed without my perceiving it: my reflections were ſtopped by the ſight of a poſt-chaiſe, which I remarked at a diſtance. It was ſtanding ſtill on the great road, and two men were employed in putting in order ſomething which belonged to it.

The ardor with which I wiſhed to find Julia again, made me regard the moſt trifling appearance as a certainty. I advanced haſtily, my heart beat, it was ſtruck by a cry which I heard near me — "O "Heavens! 'tis he himſelf!"

It was Julia and her mother. I ſaw them. I was already in their arms.

Gods! what ſoftneſs did I find in this meeting! how exquiſite are the pleaſures

which ariſe from our pains! The joy I felt at this moment ſeemed to grow from mine, and to change them into delights.

This ſenſation was too violent to be durable. What there was of enchanting in it was ſoon empoiſoned by the remembrance of our miſeries. Silence ſucceeded to our tranſports. I regarded Julia and her mother with an air of ſadneſs. Julia alſo fixed her eyes on me. Her mother wept.

"What, my deareſt mother!" cried I, "what cauſe can you have for ſorrow, "which the preſence of a ſon cannot di-"miniſh?"

At theſe words tears and ſobs ſeemed almoſt to ſuffocate Madame D'Ornance. Her face was hid by her hands, and her head

head leaned againſt a tree which ſupported her.

Julia approached me with a tender air, without ceaſing to be ſad. She took my hand, which ſhe preſſed to her heart. "Tis "you who afflict her," ſaid ſhe; "my "brother is dead!"

Madame D'Ornance, who had doubtleſs heard this laſt word, added, with a manner which expreſſed the moſt lively affliction— "He is dead, this ſon on whom my heart "doated — I ſhall ſee my child no more: "and you know if I loved him.— My "ſon!— I no longer have one! You "ought to weep with me. My misfor- "tune touches you nearly, you ought to "partake it. This fatal event will retard "your marriage, and you cannot fail "being ſenſible to it.— Alas! your ſorrow

" will be only for a time: mine will be
" eternal."

I could comprehend nothing of this diſcourſe, which agreed ſo little with the letter I had received from Monſ. D'Ornance. I did not think myſelf the leſs obliged to comfort this tender mother.

" He was my friend," ſaid I; " his loſs
" is as afflicting to me as to yourſelf. It is
" ſweet to me to mix my tears with
" yours.—But I was ignorant of this fatal
" event. I can now ſcarce even conceive
" it."

I ſhewed her her huſband's letter.—Julia read it, and their aſtoniſhment equalled mine.

" St.

" St. Forlaix," ſaid Madame D'Ornance, " I am as little inſtructed as you in the " reaſons which Monſ. D'Ornance hides " from you. I do not ſee why the death " of my ſon ſhould prevent for ever your " marriage with my daughter. Yeſterday, " as you know, an expreſs from my huſ- " band deſired to ſee me alone. He gave " me the letter, which contained his or- " ders:

" YOUR preſence here, Madam, is " indiſpenſable; do not retard your de- " parture an inſtant. Bring Julia with " you. Let one domeſtic only attend " you, with him who is the bearer of this " letter. He has a chaiſe ready. You " have the greateſt misfortunes to expect. " Prepare your ſoul for them; and, to " give

" give it the firſt ſhock, know that your
" ſon is dead. I ſhall expect you to-mor-
" row at the caſtle of Ornance, where I
" ſhall be before you."

Chaucey.

We could not reconcile this letter with that which I had received. Why ſhould the death of Corſange render the preſence of his mother and Julia indiſpenſable? what were the other misfortunes which they had to dread?

We were employed in making theſe reflections, when they came to tell us the chaiſe was ready. We muſt part. What a moment! I claſped Julia and her mother by turns in my arms.

" You," cried I, " whom I love a thou-
" ſand times more than myſelf! I ſhall
" ſee

" ſee you no more! I feel, by the exceſs
" of my ſorrow, that the adieu we now
" take will be our laſt. Julia! my mother!
" do not abandon me. I ſhall die far diſtant
" from you: either do not go, or ſuffer
" me to accompany you. If you do not
" arrive, Monſ. D'Ornance, alarmed at
" your abſence, will himſelf come in ſearch
" of you. We ſhall ſee him: we will
" implore his pity. We will force from
" him that conſent which he has now the
" cruelty to refuſe us."

My arguments did not convince them. Julia embraced me — ſhe embraced me as my wife. I was drowned in her tears, which ſhe mixed with mine. The attendants had great difficulty to tear us from each other.

I ſaw all my heart held dear already in the chaiſe; it advanced, and the firſt move-

ment

ment of the wheel drew from me a peirc-ing ſhriek, which was anſwered by one from them: they thought me wounded, they ſtopped, they were going to deſcend from the chaiſe.

"No, no," cried I, "do not prolong "my miſery. I have no wounds but thoſe "of the ſoul, and your cares will render "them more cruel. Leave me, I entreat "you."

As I pronounced theſe words, I threw myſelf with my face on the earth; I kept this poſture, amidſt torments which were inexpreſſible, all the time I heard the rolling of the chaiſe, and even long after.

All was calm, and I recovered my ſenſes like a ſick perſon who has juſt undergone ſome painful operation. My blood

was

was froze in my veins. A mortal chillneſs ſeized me — my eyes were ſwelled with tears which could not make themſelves a paſſage. My mind was unable to form any diſtinct idea. Affliction alone occupied it, but occupied it confuſedly.

It was in this ſtate I regained my houſe. The horrors of my ſituation are not diminiſhed. My ſorrow is as exquiſite as ever. You alone, Madam, can give it any alleviation, by informing me what I have to fear or hope.

ST. FORLAIX.

LET-

LETTER XLV.

To Monſ. ST. FORLAIX, at Paris.

WHAT ſhocking fatality attends this unhappy family of Ornance! If you deſire to know the cauſe of your miſeries, in the hope of finding yourſelf leſs worthy of pity, continue to weep; I have only afflicting news to tell you.

I arrived yeſterday morning at St. Forlaix. My firſt care was to fly to the caſtle of Ornance. A gloomy ſadneſs ſeemed diffuſed around it. I approached, no human being met my ſight. This houſe, once

once ſo gay, once the ſeat of convivial pleaſure, appeared now uninhabited. I continued to advance, and was juſt entering the ſaloon, when I at length met a domeſtic. He ſtopped me. I enquired for Monſ. D'Ornance.

"He is not here, Sir."

"Madame D'Ornance? her daughter?"

"It is ſtill leſs poſſible to ſee them, Sir; "the houſe is prohibited to all the world."

"But I am Monſ. De Prele; ſurely "Monſ. D'Ornance will not be ſorry to "receive *my* viſit: his orders cannot re- "gard *me*."

"They regard *you*, Sir; he has except- "ed nobody. I am perſuaded of the "pleaſure it would have given him to "have

" have ſeen you at any other time;
" but now the whole family are plunged
" in the moſt ſhocking diſtreſs; they
" avoid all eyes, they avoid even ours,
" and we know no more than you what
" paſſes in the inner part of the houſe."

" What is the reaſon of this? What
" are the diſtreſſes, and of what nature,
" which can oblige them thus to reject
" even the condolances of their friends."

" We are ignorant of them, Sir; but
" they muſt be very terrible, for we have
" never before ſeen our maſter as he is
" at preſent. He is agitated, he ſighs,
" he ſtops often as he walks, the tears
" guſh from his eyes, he raiſes them to
" Heaven, ſometimes with fury, ſometimes
" as if imploring mercy.

" He

" He then walks with precipitation; " and if he perceives he has been obſerved " by any of us in thoſe moments, he " becomes furious, he loads the perſon " with injuries, he treats him with an in- " conceivable harſhneſs; he, who is na- " turally ſo good. But we do not com- " plain, becauſe we love him. We know " he is a good maſter. We attribute to " ſome fatal event theſe ſtarts of ill hu- " mour, which we have never ſeen in him " before. We grieve for him when he " treats us ill, we weep when we ſee him " weep."

I praiſed this faithful domeſtic for his zealous attachment. " But," ſaid I, " how " long has your maſter been in this me- " lancholy ſtate? what cauſe do you ſuſ- " pect?"

" It

" It is fifteen days," replied he, " ſince
" he received a letter from Paris, which
" informed him, as we believe, of the death
" of Monſ. Corſange; we were at Charcy
" when he received it. Scarce had he
" read it, when he ſhut himſelf up in his
" cloſet. He ſtaid there a long time
" alone, he appeared at length in the
" evening, and, without taſting *any food*,
" he gave Philip the poſtillion ſeveral
" letters. Philip ſet off for Paris, and we
" for Ornance. The next day Philip re-
" turned, bringing with him my lady and
" Mademoiſelle Julia in a poſt-chaiſe.
" They immediately ſhut themſelves up in
" their apartment. From that time not
" one of us has ſeen them. My maſter
" himſelf only lets us ſee him when he
" is abſolutely obliged to it. They are
" ſerved in their antichamber, and never

" take

" take their places at table till we are
" gone out of the room. Alas! it ſeems
" as if they did not take them at all: they
" ſcarce touch what is ſet before them.
" Even the women who belong to our
" ladies have not the privilege of being
" with them.

" This, Sir, is all we know. I can be-
" lieve, the death of Monſ. Corſange is
" capable of cauſing a great degree of
" ſorrow, eſpecially to my lady; but I
" cannot conceive that this circumſtance
" alone is ſufficient to occaſion the con-
" fuſion and deſpair which at preſent reign
" in this houſe. There muſt be ſomething
" ſtill more terrible."

We continued walking on whilſt we were engaged in this converſation. We were already at ſome diſtance from the caſtle. I was

enquiring after Germain, I was aſking if I might not at leaſt be allowed to ſee him, when I perceived him at a diſtance coming towards us. His air had a wildneſs not to be deſcribed, he appeared agitated with the moſt violent inquietude; he was followed by ſeveral domeſtics, who were on horſeback as well as himſelf.

When he was near us, he ſtopped—"Ah! my dear maſter," ſaid he to me weeping, "how much is this reſpectable "family to be pitied! In what a time do "you come!"

He could ſay no more; his tears, his groans, ſtopped his utterance; he recovered the uſe of ſpeech, to give orders to the ſervants who accompanied him: "Go, "run," ſaid he, "think how much more "dreadful the misfortune of loſing her will "be

" be than all others.—O God! direct our " ſteps! enlighten us!—For you," ſaid he to the domeſtic to whom I had been talking, " return inſtantly to the caſtle; Monſ. " D'Ornance, in the ſtate in which he " now is, may have occaſion for ſome- " thing—alas! he has no longer any one " to get it him—above all, let no perſon " whatever enter."

Every one departed to the place to which he was ordered. I remained alone with Germain. I was going to aſk an explanation: he prevented me—

" Pardon me, my deareſt maſter," ſaid he: " I weep before you, even your pre- " ſence cannot conſole me. I weep, ſor- " row rends my ſoul, and the miſeries " of Monſ. D'Ornance are ſo horrible,

"that it is not permitted me to confide "them even to you."

I did not think I ought to preſs him further. He himſelf entreated me to let him go. They ſeemed to be in ſearch of ſome one of the family. I was ignorant of whom.

"What a dreadful ſpecies of misfortune "is that of this houſe!" ſaid Germain. "Their miſery will be doubled if our ſearch "is in vain; and if our cares ſucceed, "their ſouls are no longer capable of "taſting pleaſure from that ſucceſs."

He quitted me on this, deſpair in his eyes, and in his heart. The cauſe of all this diſtreſs is ſtill unknown to me.

What

What a dreadful night after ſo bright a dawn of day!

Adieu!

Your affectionate,

DE PRELE.

LETTER XLVI.

To Monſ. DE PRELE, at St. Forlaix.

Paris.

ALL is diſcovered, my dear uncle; I am poſſeſſed of this fatal ſecret, of which the ignorance appeared to me ſo cruel, and of which the knowledge reduces me to a ſtate of annihilation. Alas! whilſt I doubted of my misfortune, I cheriſhed the hope that all the attempts of her friends to tear her from me would be vain. They are now ſatisfied. I have no longer the leaſt hope of ever being happy: no, my dear uncle, I have no longer a hope remaining; I ſhall never

never be the huſband of Julia. I am myſelf compelled to ſay this—great God! how dreadful is this certainty!

My head is diſordered; it ſhares the agitation of my heart. I have been witneſs to the moſt ſhocking events: they have ſhook my reaſon; I know not what I do, or whither I go: I know not what I write to you. I cannot live long in ſo agonizing a ſtate.

A letter—hateful ſource of all our miſeries! why did I read it? why did I not continue for ever ignorant of the fatal cauſe? And I complained, wretch that I was, I complained of my uncertainty. I accuſed Monſ. D'Ornance, I accuſed you, I accuſed my mother; I was enraged with all the world—I would know, and I do

know all. This diſcovery will coſt me my life: happy in this, that the loſs of her will take from me the memory of all others.

But I deplore my misfortunes inſtead of relating them. I repeat to you, my dear uncle, I know not where I am; I am in doubt even whether I exiſt.

I was preparing to mount on horſeback, in order to ſet out for my regiment, when I received your laſt letter. I read it ſeveral times without comprehending it. That inquietude in the caſtle of Ornance, that extraordinary agitation, that ſearch of ſome one dear to them, theſe ideas alone employed my thoughts. The diſtreſs, and even the ſilence, of Germain, ſtruck me.

"Gods!"

" Gods !" cried I ſuddenly, " if it ſhould " be Julia, if ſome raviſher — let me fly " to her aſſiſtance." This thought haſtened my departure. I left my ſervants with my equipage, and went out of Paris alone. I took the road to Ornance; never did it appear to me ſo long.

I was at length within three leagues; my heart was in an agitation which I had never before experienced. I found only bitterneſs in the reflections which crowded upon me. My blood boiled in my veins, whilſt my whole body was congealed with terror. Never had I known a ſtate ſo painful. I was ſoon in a ſituation a thouſand times more cruel.

I had a ſmall arm of a river to croſs; I had choſen the place where the water was ſhallow and fordable. My horſe on a ſud-

den ſtopped, notwithſtanding all my efforts to make him advance. I was obliged to diſmount, and lead him by the bridle. At the firſt ſtep I took, my feet were entangled in ſomething which intercepted my way. I ſtooped to find what it was. I felt ſomething, which ſeemed to be a quantity of ſilk and linen, drenched in water, and covered with ſand. All I could do was to lay it on my horſe, and croſs the river on foot. The night was far advanced; the ſky was dark and cloudy, with every indication of an approaching ſtorm. My eyes could diſtinguiſh nothing; but I diſcovered plainly by my touch that what I held was a dead body. The idea made me ſhudder with horror. I conſidered a moment whether I ſhould not leave it there; but a ſentiment of humanity, and perhaps at the ſame time of curioſity, reſtrained me. I purſued my firſt intention,

tention, and ſoon gained the oppoſite ſhore.

I laid the body on the ſand. It was that of a woman. Her habits proclaimed her of diſtinguiſhed rank. The ſtorm approached, and the flaſhes of lightening already ſhone around me. I endeavored to take advantage of the faint light they afforded me. I wiped off the mud which covered the face. How was my heart moved! I had juſt finiſhed rendering her this melancholy ſervice, when a flaſh of lightening glared directly over us. Great God! what became of me! I fancied I ſaw the features of Julia. It was her mouth, the turn of her countenance. Her form ſeemed leſs elegant than my Julia's; but the water with which ſhe was ſwelled, and that which had penetrated her cloaths, might eaſily occaſion this difference. Se-

veral repeated flaſhes confirmed me in this horrible opinion. Every glare of light diſcovered to me new features, a ſtronger reſemblance, of the idol of my ſoul. The ſearch in which Germain was engaged, the ſubject of my journey, all together, gave me the agonizing conviction, that I was with her my heart ſo fondly deſired. But in what a ſtate did I find her!

The human mind ſeizes with as much eagerneſs the idea it fears, as that which it deſires. To ſuſpect this body to be that of my Julia, to be certain of it, and to claſp her in my arms, were all the work of a moment. I preſſed the ſenſeleſs body to my boſom, I bathed it with my tears. I laid my hand on the heart, and fancied I felt it beat. I ſought in vain ſome remains of life on her frozen lips. The ſcent of death, which they exhaled, could not take

from me my hope. I looſed her robe, to facilitate her reſpiration: I found in her boſom a paper which the water had drenched. I laid it to dry on the graſs, hoping to find there an explanation — how hateful was the light which it threw on my paſt uncertainty!

This reflection did not employ me long. In ſpite of my cares, in ſpite of the ardent prayers which I addreſſed to Heaven, I was ſtill pierced by the horrible idea that Julia was no more. I was far from endeavoring to divine the cauſe of this cruel event. Julia alone, Julia drowned, Julia dead in my arms, was the image with which my ſoul was filled.

I ſhould doubtleſs have remained till morning by the ſide of this corpſe, which I covered with my kiſſes, if night and the tempeſt

tempeſt had not obliged me to ſeek an aſylum. I ſummoned the little ſtrength I had left: I laid this form ſo beloved on my horſe; I mounted behind, this adored face reſting on my boſom. As we traverſed the wood, I held aſide all the branches of trees which ſeemed to bend towards her, as if ſhe had been ſtill capable of feeling, and being injured by their touch.

Judge, Sir, of what I ſuffered. You cannot conceive a ſtate ſo dreadful. Even myſelf, at the moment I experienced, could ſcarce form an adequate idea of it. It ſeemed as if my ſoul, ready to quit me for ever, only waited the moment when I could be no longer uſeful to Julia.

I had endeavored ſome time to get out of the wood, without being able to find the path. All ſeemed to conſpire to increaſe

creaſe and to prolong my miſery. I was conſtrained to wait for the day, to render to my Julia the laſt duties; determined to die as ſoon as I had done her this melancholy ſervice. I had ſeated her on the ground, and her head repoſed on my knees. Nothing could have convinced me that her whom I had ſo much loved ſtill exiſted.

The day at length came, to ſhed its light at once on my eyes and on my ſoul: my mind, deeply ſtruck, was a long time before it perceived its error. I had already looked ſome time at the body, ſtill believing I ſaw the features of my Julia. I at length regarded it as if I had not ſeen it before — it really appeared quite different to my eyes — my ſurprize increaſed with my attention — it was not Julia — it was her unfortunate mother — this reſemblance had deceived me — Gods! Julia then ſtill lives!

A ray

A ray of joy gleamed one inſtant in my heart; but it ſoon gave place to my firſt ſadneſs, which had only changed its object. I wept Madame D'Ornance almoſt as tenderly as I had wept my Julia.

The day-light was now ſufficient to enable me to read the paper which I had found. I opened it with a precipitation which was only checked by the fear of tearing it. This fear would have been much ſtronger had I known the contents. Could you have believed, my dear uncle, that, after all which I had juſt ſuffered, I ſhould have been ſuſceptible of a ſorrow ſtill more exquiſite? The paſt had oppreſſed, had almoſt rendered me ſenſeleſs; this only awakened to tear me more cruelly. It was this fatal letter which contained my condemnation, the ruin of my fondeſt

hopes,

hopes, which till this moment nothing had been able to deſtroy. I can no longer be the huſband of Julia, I can no longer be her lover; ſcarce is it permitted me to be her friend. You cannot eaſily conceive this fatal neceſſity. I can give you at preſent no other explanation. I am not ſufficiently ſure of the perſon by whom I ſend my letter. Come yourſelf, and know of me the cauſe of all our wretchedneſs.—I will finiſh my relation of this cruel occurrence.

I cannot paint to you the torments which my ſoul experienced on reading this dreadful letter. I looked at the unhappy Madame D'Ornance, and eaſily divined the reaſon of that deſpair which had reduced her to this dreadful ſtate. I was preparing to carry her to the neareſt village, when I ſaw coming towards me ſeveral men on horſeback,

horſeback, amongſt whom I diſcern
Philip, the poſtilion of Monſ. D'Ornan
They were doubtleſs ſtill engaged in th
ſad purſuit: they did not expect the n
ſery of finding her thus.

I went myſelf to meet them. As ſo
as Philip perceived me, he flew to n
I had not force to pronounce a ſingle wo
I led him by the arm to the place wher
had laid his unhappy miſtreſs. What
ſhocking object! It appeared to me
new, and as horrible, as if I had not b
prepared for it.

Philip, at this ſpectacle, could not c
tain his cries. He filled the foreſt w
them; and I, who had retained mine
this moment, could not prevent my
from joining in them. The ſight of
fliction in others excites and makes
own break forth with redoubled force.

Phi

Philip fell at the feet of the corpſe, and held it embraced. His deſpair was ſo violent, that I was obliged to employ all my efforts to conſole him.

"Leave me, Sir," ſaid he; "I have loſt "the beſt miſtreſs that the world ever "produced. Your diſcourſe can neither "repair my loſs, nor moderate my ſorrow."

I made a ſign to the other domeſtics, to take the body from him, and bear it to the caſtle. I took care myſelf of this faithful ſervant, whoſe attachment did ſo much honor to the family to whom he belonged. I forced him to remount his horſe, and we took the road to St. Forlaix; for, in the ſituation in which I ſaw him, I was unwilling he ſhould return directly to the caſtle of Ornance.

During

my dear uncle, how inſupportable is that misfortune which deſtroys even hope itſelf!

I ſhall expect you in the berlin. Take us from hence: conduct us to St. Forlaix.—Alas! to what place can you conduct me, where I ſhall not be unceaſingly purſued by the horrible remembrance of my miſeries!

END OF VOL. II.